

# INFORMATION

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AMERICAN LIFE

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# INFORMATION

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by WALTER DAKIN WILLIAMS

WHEN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS was a very young child, at a time when he was still known as Thomas Lanier Williams, his mother discovered him playing in the yard. He was in the act of digging a rather monstrous hole, and when his mother asked what he was doing he replied: "I'm diggin' to de debbil." Many of Tennessee's critics believe that he has never stopped his digging.

Tennessee himself is very much aware of this criticism, yet he is also aware of his blood relationship to one of the greatest saints in history, Saint Francis Xavier. He has named the principal character of his forthcoming movie, *The Fugitive Kind*, for the saint's brother, Valentine Xavier. It is from this brother, according to carefully documented family tradition, that Tennessee is descended.

Is there not something paradoxical, then, that Tennessee should be stigmatized as a writer of morally objectionable plays and movies? The man who has been called America's greatest living playwright has been frequently accused of continuing his childhood occupation of toying with evil.

He has certainly become America's most controversial playwright. The controversy once centered on the movie *Baby Doll*, which alone of Tennessee's works was condemned by the Roman Catholic Legion of Decency and drew the personal attack of New York's Cardinal Spellman.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

# Is Tennessee Williams a "Catholic" Playwright?

Some critics call his plays dirty.

His brother contends they are morality plays

In this particular instance, Tennessee would agree that there was some unnecessary evil depicted in the film. The most "morally offensive" scene was one without dialogue, one for which Tennessee was not in the least responsible.

Before completing an evaluation of the man and his works, let us look at Tennessee as others see him.

*Variety*, the show business weekly, commented December 30 on the heavy debate caused by the Legion of Decency's refusal to condemn Tennessee's current controversial movie, *Suddenly, Last Summer*. It said:

"The matter of the Legion's appraisal that *Suddenly* is a moral tale is defended by the Legion spokesman who last week defined the theme of the Tennessee Wil-

liams story thus: a man who uses others and their love to his own end is finally devoured by the very corruption which he has sown.

"Spokesman asked: what could be more moral? As for the homosexual nature of the unseen protagonist, spokesman said that the film, which is never explicit or obscene, also does anything but make homosexuality appear attractive or emotionally profitable. It is a stark and horrifying lesson, he opined.

"He also elaborated on the Legion's general purpose by saying that it is not, and never has been, the purpose of the Legion to forbid genuine and sincere artists from raising questions that relate to man's relationship to the world and to God. Perhaps more than any other writer in the theater today, he said, Tennessee Williams is dealing with these fundamental issues."

Walter Kerr, drama critic of the *New York Herald Tribune* and a noted Catholic layman, recently wrote: "What people seem to be saying is something like this: Mr. Williams is so good — so powerful in his instinct for the shattering scene, so naturally skillful in his



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Walter Dakin Williams, brother of Tennessee Williams, is a captain in the U. S. Air Force. A convert to Catholicism, he co-authored with Walter Robert Stewart *Nails of Protest* (Exposition Press).

---

use of the theater, and at the same time so sensitively equipped that he is able to back up nude passion with near-poetry — that it is now time for him to become better, almost time for him to become great."

With this tribute from Kerr, who thought enough of Tennessee's latest work to cast his vote in favor of *Sweet Bird of Youth* as the best play of the current season and call it "the biggest, most exhilarating jolt we've had all season," it should be evident that the playwright Williams is highly regarded in certain respectable Catholic circles.

I DO NOT wish to dismiss as illiterates all of Tennessee's critics who do not agree with Mr. Kerr. I do want to put forward my own thesis, and that of other responsible Catholics, that Tennessee is not a "dirty" writer, but is in fact greatly concerned with morality; that all of his plays, rightly understood, are "morality plays," and that what he needs is not to eliminate the evil he so brilliantly exposes, but to give a higher motivation or meaning to the pathos he depicts.

Tennessee himself has told me (when he was driving me back to an army camp during World War II) that he believes in God. Again, at the party following the opening of *Sweet Bird of Youth*, he confided that he had not only prayed for the play's success, but had remembered to offer thanks to God immediately upon receiving the good news from the critics.

In a TV interview with Mike

Wallace in March of 1958, Tennessee publicly stated that he was a religious man, and that he was hurt to think that people consider him primarily as a sordid, tragedy-obsessed, and controversial writer. He would rather think of his characters in terms of their spiritual assets — courage, generosity, humor, honesty, sympathy — than in terms of their failings.

LET US NOW look at his major works to date and evaluate them. Everyone concedes there is nothing "wrong" with *The Glass Menagerie*. It concerns the efforts of a mother, who has been deserted by her husband, to promote "happiness and good fortune" for her two children.

Her attempt to persuade her son to bring home a "gentleman caller" to meet (and presumably marry) her crippled daughter fails dismally when the caller turns out to be engaged to another girl.

"Things have a way of turning out so badly," she laments, and then proceeds to berate her son for the mistake that has been made until he, too, follows his father's footsteps and leaves the family nest.

In spite of the unhappy ending, the play has a positive and "healthy" outlook on life and will go down in history as one of the theatrical masterpieces of the English language. It eulogizes the heroic qualities of human nature in adversity. It has been translated into virtually every known language and won *The Sign* award (Tennessee's only "Catholic" accolade) as best play of the year.

But with *Streetcar Named Desire*, Tennessee switched from positive values to the negative, and *Streetcar* moves at high voltage with the negative charge. Opening night found the critics of the New York daily newspapers unanimous in their praise.

Its theme is man's inhumanity to man. Its protagonists are Blanche DuBois, a genteel woman of the Southern aristocracy, who arrives at her sister's home in New Orleans on a symbolic streetcar named desire, and her sister's husband, a crude and ruthless individual of immigrant stock, Stanley Kowalski.

Stanley determines to pull the aristocratic Blanche "down off them columns," which he does by uncovering her past and stripping her of her illusions. The rape scene was anticlimactic, as the mind and spirit of the victim had already been broken. The power and impact of this play are tremendous, as is the author's ability to excite pity for the doomed Blanche who had "always depended on the kindness of strangers."

Does not St. Paul himself say that if a man has faith that would move mountains but lacks charity, it availeth him naught? Few of us will recognize in ourselves the brutality and selfishness of a Stanley Kowalski, but we will readily admit of its existence in many of our fellow travelers in this vale of tears. There can be no valid moral objection to the exposure of this sort of sin in human nature. One could, however, wish for a ray of hope for mankind.



AN INNOCENT 2 1/2-YEAR-OLD TENNESSEE WILLIAMS HOLDS A MORNING GLORY HE HAS PLUCKED IN HIS YARD AT COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI.

THIS RAY OF hope is again absent in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, in *Orpheus Descending* and in the present *Sweet Bird of Youth*. *Cat* is a searing, devastating play that resembles a symphony of evil. Mendacity, or lying, is its central theme.

The three principal characters are Maggie (the Cat), her husband Brick (an alcoholic who refuses to recline on the connubial couch), and the fabulous Big Daddy. None of the three will face the truth about themselves or their problems.

Everybody knows Big Daddy is dying of cancer but Big Daddy himself, who clings to the illusion that what ails him is a non-malignant "spastic colon." In a shattering scene Big Daddy forces Brick to acknowledge that he was more

responsible for his friend Skipper's suicide than was Maggie.

The end finds Big Daddy reconciled to his death, Brick still an alcoholic, but willing to resume his role as Maggie's husband. This, too, is a morality play in that it exposes evil, but its greatness is dimmed through lack of a character who can command genuine sympathy from the audience as did the mother in *The Glass Menagerie*.

THE PLAYWRIGHT strikes a glancing blow at the evil of racial intolerance in both *Orpheus* and *Sweet Bird*, but does not come to grips with it. He is more concerned with the evil of sexual depravity. *Orpheus Descending*, soon to be released as a movie titled *The Fugitive Kind*, is the most melodramatic of Tennessee's works and, like the others, richly poetic.

Symbolism plays an important part. The third act finds the husband, who represents death, shooting his wife in the abdomen where she is carrying a child conceived in a sinful liaison with a young, guitar-playing adventurer, Val Xavier.

This hero, caught in the grip of corruption, bemoans his lost innocence. He speaks of a strange sky-colored bird that never lands on earth, but stays clean and untouched high in the sky near the sun. Xavier says, "I'd like to be one of those birds and never be corrupted!"

The basic theme of Tennessee's recent Broadway play, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, is somewhat similar, with violence playing an impor-

tant part. As in *Orpheus Descending*, the hero, Chance Wayne, laments his corruption by life and seeks to recapture his "sweet bird of youth" — his lost innocence.

In both plays, the wages of sin are death and (in *Sweet Bird*) mutilation. In neither play does the sinner triumph nor is sin glorified or made attractive.

Quite the contrary, for at the end of *Sweet Bird*, the "hero" does not even ask for our pity or understanding. He does ask for the recognition of himself in us and "the enemy, time, in us all."

AS A CONVERT to Catholicism, I have been pleased to discover that Tennessee, in his writings, has exhibited an increasing interest in Catholicism.

In *The Rose Tattoo*, for instance, the heroine, Seraphina, implores the village priest to reveal the secrets of her dead husband's confession in order to dispel her doubts concerning his faithfulness toward her. A violent argument ensues when the priest refuses to violate the seal of the confessional.

Moreover, I was interested to find in the printed stage directions for the theater version of *Suddenly, Last Summer* an illusion to the Blessed Sacrament: "She lifts a thin gilt-edged volume from the patio as if elevating the Host before the altar."

Even when he appears to be "diggin' to de debbil," Tennessee is really looking for God. The faded movie queen of *Sweet Bird of Youth* voices the author's search when she says near the play's end: "Some day the mystery God may

step down from behind his clock like an actor divesting himself of make-up and costume."

He has observed the struggle between good and evil and dramatically portrayed it in all his works, particularly in *Summer and Smoke*. There, the spiritually-minded daughter of a clergyman succeeds in converting the carnally-inclined son of a physician to a belief in God.

This conflict of the spirit with the flesh ends in a draw as the daughter, Alma (Spanish for soul), herself succumbs to the sensual side of her nature. St. Paul was aware of this constant danger when he wrote of his fear that "although I save others, I may lose my own soul."

THOUGH THE FORCES of evil often triumph in Tennessee's plays, as they do in this world, no one can doubt that Tennessee's own sympathies lie with the Blanches and Almas, the Valentine Xaviers and the Chance Waynes. He laments the loss of their innocence, their lives, and their souls.

What he is searching for, and is yet to find, is hope and redemption — pardon for the sinner in the mercy of an all-loving God Who will reward the sinner who succeeds in overcoming the evil effects of sin. As a searcher after truth, Tennessee may yet be led by his writings to what I have found to be the fountain of all Truth, the Church.

In a recent conversation, Tennessee confided to me that although he was not certain that any Christian church had as yet discovered God, if it were now necessary for

him to make a choice between the various churches he would choose the Catholic Church.

Critics and theater-goers have commented upon Tennessee's preoccupation with death. Many of his closest friends, including Diana Barrymore and even his childhood sweetheart, Hazel Kramer, were cut down before the "sweet bird of their youth" had flown. At an early age, diphtheria devastated Tennessee's health and left after-effects that threatened to rob him of his sight and even of life itself.

A STORY FROM Tennessee's childhood is illustrative of Tennessee's present state of mind.

There was a day in Mississippi when the storm clouds gathered and Ozzie, the Negro maid, hurried outside to pull up the awnings. On the porch she stumbled over the future playwright, who was scurrying back and forth from the yard to the porch, carrying in his toys. Frightened by the sound of thunder and the streaks of lightning, the tiny tot raised his blue eyes to the dark sky and prayed: "Please God, don't let it rain until I get my things in."

Today, having recently returned from a globe-circling trip with four new plays in varying degrees of completion, Tennessee is anxious to complete his life's work in the shortest possible time.

The clock is ticking loudly for Tennessee as it did for Chance Wayne. He senses that "the enemy, time" may run out for him, too, and he is anxious to bring in all his "toys" before the coming rain.

# We Tried Natural Childbirth

IN the following pages, John and Margaret McPartland, president couple of the Christian Family Movement in the New York Archdiocese, tell of their experiences in "natural childbirth."

As one nursing Sister advised, the expression "natural childbirth" is really a misnomer. "It infers that there can be such a thing as *unnatural* childbirth."

The advocates of "natural childbirth" also discourage the expression "painless childbirth." It is a misleading one, they say.

Simply, natural childbirth (to use the misnomer) is childbirth without fear. A mother who gives birth to a child by this method is fully conscious at the moment of delivery. She has been prepared for this moment both physically and psychologically.

Mothers who require anesthesia are not frowned upon by responsible advocates of natural childbirth. Some expectant mothers anxious to try the new method have been advised that, because of physical or psychological characteristics, they "weren't the type."

To prepare a mother for natural childbirth two things must be accomplished: her fear of childbirth

must be banished and her body must be made to actively assist in the delivery.

Since fear is caused by ignorance, the mother-to-be is thoroughly educated in the processes involved in pregnancy and delivery. She is perhaps taken on a pre-delivery "tour" through the hospital where she will go to have her baby. And, if hospital regulations and the obstetrician permit, the husband will be at her side in the delivery room.

Her body is prepared through carefully supervised exercises designed to strengthen or adapt certain muscles for the "labor" of childbirth. The mother-to-be is taught how to breathe, how to relax between labor contractions, how to use muscles in assisting rather than resisting the normal birth process.

The result of it all is an experience such as the one that follows. Reactions are expressed by John and Margaret separately, first one, then the other.

Further information on natural childbirth may be obtained by writing: Maternity Center Association, 48 East 92nd Street, New York 28, N. Y.

by JOHN and MARGARET MC PARTLAND



## MARGARET:

Natural childbirth had no particular appeal to me. I did not seek information about it or wish to experience it. Toward the termination of my fourth pregnancy, my doctor suggested that, if possible, it might be wise to take little or no anesthesia in order to give the baby every possible chance of survival.

Immediately after the birth of our second child it was discovered she was an Rh-factor baby. Our third child, a boy, lived only four hours.

It was believed that our fourth child had only a 50-50 chance of survival and that the Rh condition would be progressively worse with each pregnancy. That was the reason for the doctor's suggestion.

Naturally I was most anxious to do anything and everything in my power to afford the baby every opportunity for survival. At the doctor's suggestion I borrowed Grantly Dick Read's book, *Childbirth Without Fear*, from the library, devoured it and practiced the exercises suggested in it. Although pregnancy had always brought us close together, this added hope and enlightenment made us closer still.

It also opened up to me a whole new concept of pregnancy. I was beginning to appreciate the part I was to play in the delivery of our child.

I was going to have to do some very hard work, which no doubt would be painful at times, but in learning about the various stages of labor, how to relax, how to breathe, I discovered I was no longer fearful as I had been. It seemed that knowing what to expect helped to dispel my anxieties.

In my previous deliveries I welcomed the inhalation of ether and the oblivion it brought until the doctor wakened me to show me the baby.

This time it was different.

The anesthesia was there for me to use whenever I found it necessary. During this delivery an inhaler was attached to my wrist for self-administration of a non-anesthetic gas to make the uterine contractions a little less uncomfortable.

I was completely conscious at the moment of delivery and saw the baby the second she was born. The feeling of accomplishment was momentous. I had participated in this creation of a new soul. I really felt I knew then why God created me a woman. The presence of God in the delivery room was breath-taking. I remember the baby's first cry was exhilarating.

There was an immediate intimacy between this baby and me that I did not recall in the births of our other children.

#### JOHN:

I can well remember how mixed my feelings were when Margaret first told me we were going to have our baby by natural childbirth. I felt pleased that she was willing, because the doctor had told her the baby would have a better chance.

On the other hand, I was worried because of the painful experience I expected she would go through. My talks with Margaret, the reading I did and the attitude of Margaret and her doctor helped to take away some of the fears I had for her.

The morning of the baby's birth finally arrived. A good friend drove us to the hospital. That rainy morning I could not help remembering that just three years earlier we had lost our little boy.

I remembered how trying an experience was the waiting downstairs for news. When the doctor came to tell me that the boy had no chance but that he had been baptized, I felt badly for Margaret. I wanted to be with her and I am sure she wanted me, too, but it was more than an hour before I was allowed to see her.

This time the waiting downstairs was just as trying. It was not until about 6 that evening that the doctor came down to tell me the baby would arrive in a couple of hours and that he had good hope for it. I felt so relieved I went to get a bite to eat.

*"The instruction given in regard to nature's travail in childbirth, the correction of false interpretations of organic sensations and the invitation to correct them, the influence exercised to avoid groundless anxiety and fear, the assistance afforded the mother in childbirth opportunely to collaborate with nature, to remain tranquil and under self-control, an increased consciousness of the greatness of motherhood in general, and particularly of the hour when the mother brings forth her child—all these are positive values to which no reproach can be made. They are benefits for the mother in childbirth, and fully conform to the will of the Creator."*

POPE PIUS XII  
January 8, 1956

When I returned, our little girl was born. She needed much care and it was really several days later that we knew for sure she would live.

When I was permitted to visit Margaret, I was amazed at how alert she was and how elated with her new experience. I listened with awe as she described the birth of our newest baby. For some reason, which I could not understand at the time, something was missing for me. I was on the outside looking in.

#### MARGARET:

I told John that, having experienced both methods of childbirth, now I felt I was cheated in not having been a conscious part of the previous births. The difference between actively participating and passively participating in the birth of our child was incredible.

I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the recovery period was almost immediate without benefit of anesthesia. There was no feeling of nausea. As a matter of fact, I was starved and proceeded to eat ravenously. The day after delivery I felt so much stronger, too. There was no feeling of weakness that seems to follow anesthesia.

The entire experience was such a magnificent one for me that when I learned we were expecting our fifth baby, I wanted John to share in the birth of our child. Fortunately the doctor was able to arrange this.

While there are very few hospitals which permit fathers

to be present in the delivery room, some do permit their presence in the labor room. Some of the reasons given for refusing this privilege are the lack of space, the need for additional staff, the possible invasion of the privacy of other patients and the possibility of contamination by additional persons on the delivery floor.

### JOHN:

The next time we expected a baby, Margaret again informed me that she was going to have the baby by natural childbirth. This time she added a little surprise — she casually let me know that the doctor would arrange for me to be present in both the labor and delivery rooms.

To tell the truth, I didn't look forward to this with any great relish. I was afraid I might not stand up to the pressures I would experience. At the ~~same~~ time I realized the baby might not live and I wanted to be able to give Margaret all the help and consolation that I could.

I am certain now that what had happened in the past had helped prepare me to accept my part in natural childbirth. I still can't claim that I was looking forward to it. Away back in my mind there lurked the hope that the hospital might not permit me to be in the delivery room.

There was no rushing to the hospital this time as the doctor had decided to induce birth about ■ week ahead of time. I don't think I'll ever forget the feelings I had that day when we arrived on the delivery floor. A nurse took Margaret away to prepare her for delivery. I was seated in a little alcove to await the time when I would be allowed to join Margaret in the labor room. Everyone seemed so busy and so efficient I felt all alone and it took all my will power not to bolt out the door.

When I arrived in the labor room, I soon began to sense the reason for my being there. My place was by my wife's side. We really supplied the needs of each other. We talked and prayed together. We were ready to accept God's will. How much better it was than being in the waiting room.

It was not long before Margaret was taken to the delivery room for the induction. I was allowed to go along. This was not an involved process but I can remember quaking a bit even at this. We returned to the labor room

and labor started, slowly at first but more rapidly ■ the hours went on.

I can never give enough praise to the doctor, the nurses and the nuns for the kindness and consideration given to us. Even so, ■ hospital is a busy place and there would have been, by necessity, much time that Margaret would have had to be alone. We had so much to say to each other. I timed her contractions and, when necessary, I comforted her and she comforted me.

The time went so much faster than on the other occasions when I had been downstairs, jumping every time the elevator door opened. There was no reason now for my imagination to run riot about what was happening upstairs. I was there.

The time for the baby's birth was at hand. Margaret was wheeled into the delivery room and I was asked to follow. The nurse indicated a little stool beside the delivery table at the left of Margaret's head. I still wasn't fully sure that this was for me. I'm not sure whether or not the doctor sensed it. He asked me to tie up his robe in the back. As I finished doing this, the nurses asked for the same help. I was completely robed with hat and mask and I seemed then to feel a part of the team.

It's difficult for me to tell of the wonder of the birth of our child. I held Margaret's hand during the contractions and wiped the sweat from her forehead. She smiled up at me and assured me that it wasn't too painful, but that it was more hard work — labor rather than pain.

When the baby's head emerged, it was a distinct thrill for me to see the wonder of God's work. A few more contractions and the doctor held our daughter up for us to see. My feelings were of awe and thanksgiving.

I looked at Margaret and never had she been more beautiful. Never had I been more grateful to God and to her. I looked at her and with my heart bursting with joy I thanked her and said, "Honey, anything you want you can have." She replied with a real twinkle in her eyes, "I'll take a car."

#### MARGARET:

I felt so secure in knowing John would be with me although I realized this must have been an anxious time

for him. After the induction, labor began slowly and we had plenty of time to talk, to pray the Rosary and to wonder about the baby's condition.

It was so much easier for me having John there. He rubbed my back, timed the contractions and as they continued to become stronger we almost rejoiced because we knew that soon our baby would be born.

And then it was time to transfer to the delivery room. The sterility and starkness of it might well frighten any father. But now we were really actively involved in the birth of our baby. John held my hand and prayed for both of us. I tried to remember what I'd learned and co-operated with the doctor's instructions (I didn't use the inhaler this time) and then we witnessed together the birth of our fifth child.

It was the most magnificent moment in our lives. We both felt it was as though the two of us were truly one in the union of our marriage with God in the birth of a new soul. The baby's condition was much better than anticipated and she recovered very rapidly.

This fifth baby was only the second child that came home from the hospital when I did. The joy we and the children experienced the day we brought the baby home is indescribable. God's goodness to us was overwhelming.

Our sixth child also arrived with benefit of natural childbirth. Her condition was critical at birth but through God's grace and the miraculous efforts of the doctors, nurses and nuns at the hospital she had four complete exchange transfusions and was ready to come home when she was three weeks old. We now realize that the Rh condition does not necessarily get progressively worse with each pregnancy.

To me, having a baby is one of the most rewarding experiences a woman can have. It is a fulfillment. The entire nine months' pregnancy with all the indispositions culminating in the birth of the baby is God's gift to a woman.

Both John and I feel it is of utmost importance to know the function of both husband and wife in pregnancy and childbirth. It was not until the birth of our fourth child that we realized this importance and enjoyed the complete experience of childbirth the natural way. ■■

# You Can't Alter an Altar Boy

The cassocked figures may look like  
little angels, but look again  
and you'll find they're just boys

by HELENE COAN KOPP

IT IS A few minutes before Mass time. The church is nearly filled. All is quiet except for an occasional cough or the rattle of beads. Now and then we hear someone tiptoeing down the aisle and a click as a high heel accidentally hits the floor, or the shuffling of feet as a reluctant tot is half led, half dragged to a pew.

Someone in the choir loft rustles the pages of a hymn book and the organist strikes a key as she leans down to remove her high heels and put on the flats she keeps under the organ bench. A black-robed nun glides from the sacristy and slips into her place on the aisle in the front pew.

A light switch clicks and the altar is bathed in light. Tall, brass candlesticks gleam. Tabernacle curtains shine. Mass cards sparkle above the smooth white cloth. A

hush settles over the congregation as the sacristy door opens and there emerges a small figure carrying a long, lighted taper.

In starched white surplice and ankle-length black cassock, he moves silently from candle to candle on the right side of the altar. As if hypnotized, all eyes focus on the flickering taper held in place until each tiny spark grows into flame.

Carefully the small figure descends the steps and genuflects, then ascends the steps and lights the candles on the left side. One candle refuses to light. The taper is adjusted. It flares into leaping, licking fire and is quickly buried



into ■ candletop. Time stands still. Then the taper is edged away—cautiously. A feeble glow remains. The congregation is at ease.

The figure once again descends, genuflects, turns a perfectly square corner and, looking neither to the left nor to the right, disappears behind the sacristy door.

Over in a pew near the front of the church a nervous father slowly releases his breath and ■ mother gives ■ little sigh. An older brother looks at his sister kneeling beside him and smiles. With the barest flicker of an eyelash the black-robed nun on the aisle turns another page in her prayer book. Tommy has successfully cleared the first hurdle.

THIS LITTLE DRAMA is played time after time in Catholic churches all over the United States where daily 380,000 altar boys serve Mass.

Hundreds of Tommys are taking part in this greatest of performances as their mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers sit nervously down front in orchestra seats, watching and praying for ■ "hit." Will he remember the tricky *Suscipiat*? Will he ring the bells on time? Suppose he drops the book or spills the wine.

And what of the actor in this drama? Carefully drilled and rehearsed, suffering opening night jitters with accompanying butterflies, he waits for his cue. Then as the sacristy door opens and the bell rings, with hands folded and eyes straight ahead, he comes on stage in his first big role as "Altar Boy."

WHAT IS AN altar boy? How old is he? What is he like? What are his problems and what makes him tick?

Along about the time a fellow is in fifth grade he gets the word that the time is now. If he wants to become an altar boy he should report to this or that room at such and such a time. The room is filled to capacity, for there are always more boys anxious to serve than there are cassocks to be filled.

(It was not always thus, apparently, as more than one ex-altar boy has admitted that he was chosen by a nun who walked along the line and, as she mentally fitted the boys to the cassocks hanging in the sacristy, chose this one and that one to "volunteer" to learn the Latin and become a Mass server.)

Our candidate is first prepared to walk in processions. Sounds easy? Ever try to train a puppy to sit or heel at your command? Multiply this by 20 or 30 and you have the problem the Sister faces as she begins to train these boys to walk in a straight line, hands folded, and eyes straight ahead, when their minds are full of baseball, comic books, and "I wonder what's for dinner."

Greg confesses he is able to keep his eyes straight ahead only by counting hairs on the back of the neck of the boy in front.

After marching has been mastered, our boy is allowed to be in processions or to carry the candles during Stations of the Cross. All this time he is learning the Latin for the Mass and this, most admit, is the really hard part.

## Ever stop to think how much trouble ■ long skirt can be to an active boy?

Here's where the whole family gets into the act and often *et cum spiritu tuo* can be heard floating down the stairs in response to a shouted *Dominus vobiscum* from below.

After many months of study and practice, Tommy finally gets to serve his first Mass. It's hard on Tommy, that first Mass. But it's equally hard on his family. Watching while he more or less unerringly moves the book, pours the wine and recites the Latin responses, his proud and happy but exhausted family fervently joins in his *Amen*.

It's all terribly exciting the first few times, sure, but what about later on? Doesn't it get tiring or boring doing the same things over and over?

I have talked with dozens of altar boys and ex-alter boys and not a single one has admitted that any part of the Mass has ever been boring for him.

Other ceremonies, yes. Long-winded sermons (especially in foreign languages), long periods of kneeling at Forty-hour Devotions, and sometimes Stations of the Cross, yes. But never, never the actual Mass. All admit they feel very close to God in a manner never experienced in the pew.

One erudite gentleman put it this way, "What was most absorbing, if less conscious, was how completely I was drawn into the sacrifice. There was a certain awe in knowing I had somehow tran-

scended the usual states of consciousness wherein diverse attractions vie for a piece of attention."

And a little beginner, less learned but no less awed, said softly, "Gosh, it felt just like God knew I was there."

How about these boys? Are they all little saints? Is this the *real* boy we see so precisely executing his movements and devoutly kneeling in prayer?

Let's go back to Tommy who was lighting the candles a while ago. Suppose we follow him as he extinguishes the taper, quietly opens the sacristy door, passes through, and closes it behind him.

Now, beyond the discerning eye of his teacher, beyond the critical eye of the priest, beyond the doting eyes of his parents, he executes a fancy bit of footwork, ending with left arm upraised, feet widely planted and taper thrust forward as he whispers, "*En garde*."

Immediately, someone grabs another taper and parries his thrust. Over in the corner another pair of comedians are pirouetting and curtsying, daintily holding out the unfamiliar cassock skirts as they caricature a minuet.

Ever stop to think how much trouble a long skirt can be to an active boy? Watch how many women at the altar rail catch their heels in the hems of their dresses or coats. And remember, women are trained from infancy to handle skirts.

But these boys, at an age when they have trouble just managing their own hands and feet, are beset with long, full skirts. This is no small thing. It takes a lot of practice to be able to hit the back of your knees with your hand just at the moment you kneel so as to bring the hem up out of danger's way. The timing must be perfect or the situation can be very awkward.

AND CARRYING the paten — our boy must walk backwards, adjusting his speed to the speed of the priest. One priest may be slow and halting in distributing Communion while another, like a missionary priest the boys still talk about, "does it just like he was dealing cards."

How saintly this boy looks as he crosses and recrosses the sanctuary at the side of the priest. But can you be sure he isn't taking careful note of every bridge and molar and making mental notes to add to his already copious repertoire of "Faces People Make When They Stick Out Their Tongues"?

And how about carrying that book up and down the steps, at the same time trying to manage the long skirt? Jimmy, who was quite small for his age, had convinced himself and the nun that he was really quite capable, and so was allowed the enviable privilege of serving at Christmas Mass — an honor sought by all.

On this great feast the sacristan had, of course, pulled out all the stops and substituted the large, heavy, gold-encrusted book for the lightweight one Jimmy was used

to. Completely unaware of the weight differential, Jimmy walked up to the altar, grabbed the book, turned around and promptly staggered down the steps. (Of course St. John Berchmans, patron saint of all altar boys, was on duty "upstairs" that morning, so nothing was hurt but Jimmy's pride.)

EVER CONSIDER the hazards involved in pouring the wine and the water? When a priest has enough wine he merely raises the chalice a little and the altar boy stops pouring. But sometimes a boy doesn't recognize the cue and a sort of endurance contest ensues.

The priest raises the chalice and the boy follows with the cruet. The contest usually ends when chalice and cruet are well above the boy's eye level — the cruet empty and the chalice half filled. And the poor priest very likely is one of the many who do not relish a cup of wine as an early morning eye-opener.

LIKE POURING the wine, swinging the censer can get out of hand, too. To be able to stand back of the other boys at Benediction and swing the censer back and forth is quite a treat in itself.

Jerry tells about one time he was enjoying this honor and as the music grew louder and the incense drifted around him, he swung the censer back and forth, back and forth. In a sort of mesmerized state he swung it higher and higher and faster and faster, until suddenly recalled to reality by a loud "harrumph." The censer came dangerously close to bridging

CARRYING THAT BIG BOOK UP AND DOWN THE STEPS, AT THE SAME TIME MANAGING A LONG SKIRT, CAN BE QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR A BOY.

the arc for a complete circle in the air.

THEN THERE IS the little matter of hanging up your cassock and surplice. Sister, unlike a guy's mother, will never pick it up herself but will come tearing into the classroom, grab him by the neck, march him right back to the sacristy and make him hang it up just so.

Even Pope Pius XII, when he visited his old parish church, is reported to have smiled as he inspected the sacristy and remarked, "That's where I used to toss my surplice and cassock in a heap." But try to tell that to Sister!

It's not too easy for a boy to keep from smiling on Holy Saturday as he sees twelve barefoot men lined up in the sanctuary or to put the shoes back on a chubby priest after the washing of the feet. An altar boy has all kinds of troubles.

It's not all thorns, though. There are some roses. There is the annual altar boy picnic, when they all pile into the bus and head for the beach, the woods, or the ball park.

Or the time a fellow accidentally spills a little wine on his hand and licks it off. Doesn't taste very good but makes him feel kind of deliciously wicked for a while.

Or when the Cardinal visits his parish and the altar boys are invited to dinner in the rectory.



What a thrill to know they are being served in the kitchen exactly the same menu the Cardinal is being served in the dining room.

IT'S A FEW minutes after Mass. The prayers for the conversion of Russia have been said. The priest and altar boys have left the altar. The church is empty except for a few souls kneeling in silent prayer. The organ is still. Somewhere a light switch clicks and the altar is again in semi-darkness.

The sacristy door opens and a small figure emerges, carrying an extinguisher. In starched white surplice and long black cassock, he moves from candle to candle, extinguishing each tiny flame. Then he descends the steps, genuflects, turns a perfectly square corner and disappears behind the sacristy door.

*Ite, missa est. Deo gratias.* ■ ■

# WE,

by APRIL OURSLER ARMSTRONG

A well-known author and convert  
tells what is really meant  
by "Spirituality for the Layman"

"SPIRITUALITY for the Layman" is a most respectable sounding subject, properly edifying, terrifying — and dull. I refuse to have anything to do with it on those terms, because what we are talking about is so different.

*Spirituality* is a word I do not like because it has come to sound thin and wispy and dry-sad. Holiness, the living loving adventure of sharing God's own life is wide and strong and joyous.

*Layman* is another word I dislike. It's from an honorable Greek word meaning *of the people*. It was once used in English — also honorably — specifically to mark off the people from the priests.

But the word has been rough-handled till it has come to mean also the unprofessional and the uneducated in any field — amateurs who should know their place and keep silent. And though we are not priests, at the business of living in Christ we dare not be mild dilettantes.

*People* sounds better than *laymen*, but even the word *people*, thanks to the communists, is los-

ing dignity. A new word is needed for us who are members of Christ.

In the first days of the Church, folks like us were referred to simply as "the saints." That phrase might not be the one to use today, but it comes nearer the astonishing truth than any I've yet heard.

"Spirituality for the Layman" sounds like a side line. Holiness is our lifeline, our chief vocation. And the Life of the People of God, meaning you and me, is the Business of Being Made Saints.

WE PEOPLE living today are able to be embarrassed more easily than the people who dared live the Creed before it was written down. We're so shy that even *Saint-in-the-Making* sounds a bit presumptuous or saccharine to our ears. Yet this is, I firmly believe, a new age of saints, of holy life among the People of God.

I do not know many people who would feel at home in a cloak called "Spirituality for the Layman." But I do know 20 or 30 people of grace who are really living by truly loving Him.

# the People of God

I THINK OF Yvonne, a widowed teacher, who sacrifices her holidays to take wheel chair cripples to Mass. Or of Nick, a top executive salesman, who spends spare time selling African carvings for the Consolata Society for Foreign Missions. Or of the 14 businessmen who have adopted an order of Sisters and cope with all their material problems.

I think of Mary, who with nine children goes to daily Mass. Of Mike, who studies nights to enter labor law because he wants to carry Christ into that key area, and of Bob, who lies flat on his back offering his suffering for the rest of us.

I think of Helen, who takes the problems and worries of wife and motherhood as the sacrament of the moment, and of Frank, who considers the guarding of his Christian home more important than any business deal.

THEY, AND thousands like them, have discovered the life that is worth living, and through knowledge and prayer and action they are Saints-in-the-Making.

The old truth they have discovered for themselves is simply this: That we all have two lives to live. One is the life of a natural human being, hybridized by original sin. The other is the life of God in us and our life in Him, that tremendous secret of our royal birth and

destiny which is hidden in the rags of our natural life.

We are all changelings, unknown and unsung in our star-bright dignity. We carry in us the birthright to heaven proven in our likeness to the King. We are builders and planters, givers and tenders of God's own life on earth.

We are undercover agents, revolutionaries, soldiers, commissioned to serve Christ the King in the time-long battle with Satan and death, charged with yielding our lives to ransom the world. And we are more than that. We are, by grace, hidden tabernacles where the Trinity with all Its mysteries dwells.

That is what it means, this spirituality for laymen, which we call the life of the people of God.

And the way to live it is to know what it is all about.

KNOWLEDGE OF the Faith is not the same as catechism, just as being a parent and taking a course for expectant fathers are two startlingly different things.

Some people of God do assume they have learned in school all they need to know about their life. Some expect theology is dull and too difficult for them. But today more and more quite normal "acceptable" people are finding that exploring the treasure house of Faith is necessary, and fun.

Dick is a commercial pilot mar-

ried to a charming ex-airline stewardess—the kind of couple who could pose for illustrations of gracious sociable modern living. Dick is the last thing from an oddball or an egghead.

Yet Dick and my husband spent two hours on the phone the other night chewing the problems of God's omniscience, predestination, and free will. And neither thought the other dull or sanctimonious.

What brought the subject up? To Dick it is all-important to know that salvation depends on his free will, that he is responsible at every moment for flying the course God mapped out. To Dick's wife, Jean, it is just as important to be sure that God knows exactly what will happen to her now and forever.

Their supertime discussion continued while they bedded their babies; it drove them to inquiry and study that is still going on. The fact that they've tackled one of the toughest problems, the fact that they're both right, doesn't frighten them. They're excited.

But, as Dick said, "It's an odd feeling to call up a friend just to talk religion at our age. I was afraid you might think I was off my rocker. But it's swell to find out men can talk about God without first getting too drunk to make sense!"

God ALONE knows why we people of Christ have been so shy with each other when it comes to the only things that really matter. He knows, but I'm sure He does not approve.

We discuss a swarm of intimate

matters. But oddly, the reticence which once cloaked our mention of sex has come to apply now to our knowledge of the facts of the other life, our knowledge of the Faith. That self-conscious silence can be disastrous.

We need to talk to each other. We need also a knowledge of our Faith which is deep and positive. We need to study God not for argument's sake but for love's sake. And that is a nuance a few of us have still missed.

TAKE OUR neighbor. She's a great one for studying religion. She is determined to be able to answer attacks on the Church. She is armed with facts about the Spanish Inquisition and the role of the Church in Spain today, about what Immaculate Conception means and why the Bible mentions "brethren" of Jesus. She is glorious in a fray. But with all due respect, she has not yet begun to know what we all need to know.

For example, she is upset over the Puerto Ricans who are "sullying" our old New England streets, and she does not know enough about the Mystical Body of Christ to cope with her own reactions. She does not even understand that her reactions are wrong.

The best defense may be offense, but the best defense of Faith is never offensive. It is living and loving. And what we need are not walking encyclopedias or intellectual snobs, but a people with a working knowledge of truth.

You can find many such people today. You can find women who not only read new recipes, mar-

## Some people have an idea they need an etiquette book to be able to pray to God

riage-counseling columns and articles on interior decoration but who also read up on the art and secrets of making a home in heaven. They have learned that the life of grace is more important than gracious living, and far more challenging.

You can find men who not only read the *Wall Street Journal* and the trade and news magazines but who also read periodicals and books that deepen their knowledge of the wonderful world of Faith — to get ahead in the one field where advance is practically guaranteed by effort and grace, and the security they earn is eternal.

MY FRIEND PAT is a nice intelligent high school graduate who can grasp the ins-and-outs of a sewing pattern and reads *Time* and the *Ladies' Home Journal*. When she joined a Study Group she was sure it would be good for her but beyond her. She would listen, not talk. After all, she was only a lay-person, and a woman at that.

The night she learned the lingo and found out what the Mystical Body of Christ was all about she was so excited she couldn't sleep. She came over for coffee in the morning.

"I figured it out. God knew what dopes we were when He made us. And He knew we would need to know what He was talking about, so He made it simple. And what isn't simple, what is mys-

tery, we don't need to understand.

"It's like my turning on TV. I don't need to know electronics to make it work. But I'd be a darned fool if I was too scared to turn the switch. And I have a feeling I'd be a really damned fool on judgment day if I was too scared to sort of tune in on God now."

When the day comes that a baby figures out even dimly who his parents are, the first thing he does is make a noise and try to talk to them. The more he communicates with them the more he learns, till one day he begins speaking their language.

PRAYER IS OUR way of getting in touch with God, holding out our arms to Him, loving Him, talking and listening, slowly learning His language. "Pray always," He told us. And we pray.

But sometimes even the people of God get a little self-conscious talking to Him. We get a sneaky suspicion we need an etiquette book. And since manuals of prayer are often baffling, we put off prayer till we have time to do a really nice job.

The other day our little Cathy was praying, sitting on her bed talking quietly about her problems which involved a friend's calling her a fat knucklehead and also her fear of an airplane crashing into our roof on some future day. An older child of ours, lofty in his fourth-grade wisdom, informed her

(Continued on page 43)

# Inside Information

Did the World Refugee Year fall flat on its face?

Official estimates will provide an answer by summer's end and it is still possible the observance may finish up in June with a great dramatic flash of some kind.

But, despite occasional bright spots, action seems to have been little and talk much during most of the year. The world's millions of homeless persons heard themselves talked about, but saw little extra effort in their behalf.

When first proposed, as noted here, the year was seen as a united effort by governments and private agencies to arouse public opinion and stimulate action.

It may have done some of the first but virtually none of the last.

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A sizzling controversy seems promised by a three-year study of how educational materials in Catholic, Protestant and Jewish schools and Sunday classes treat other religions.

The final report is slated for August, but a preliminary report already charges that Catholic materials studied "tend to pretend" there are no other religions. No reports yet on materials of other Faiths.

Conducting the study is St. Louis University (run by the Jesuits), Yale University and Dropsie College, a private Philadelphia institution.

The report on the Catholic study, being conducted by St. Louis, stated the apparent Catholic fault is one of omission, rather than anything

detrimental to other churches.

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Poor Padre Pio!

The saintly stigmatic has been made the reputed source of a "prophecy" that two-thirds of the world's population will be destroyed by a calamity on July 21.

The story became so widespread recently that Padre Pio denied it.

The twist is that the superior general of his order, the Capuchin Friars Minor, said such rumors of disaster have been denied many times since 1946—and each time the "prophecy" has a different disaster date.

A puzzling thing to investigators of such falsehoods is the large role schoolchildren have in spreading them. Where do they pick them up?

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It seems unlikely that U. S. Catholics will enjoy next Lent the relaxation of fast and abstinence laws that most Canadian Catholics have this Lent.

No one except the U. S. Bishops knows whether U. S. regulations will be eased, but it seems that conditions in this country are not such as to bring about a change.

Most Canadian dioceses adopted new regulations, explaining that old fast and abstinence rules were too great a hardship on workers, especially those in heavy industry. The country's cold winters were cited.

Now north of the border abstinence applies in most dioceses only on Fridays and fasting only on four days: Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Vigil of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 7) and the day before Christmas eve (Dec. 23).

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The conservative American Farm Bureau Federation and the internationally-minded National Catholic

Rural Life Conference apparently will bring their deep-rooted disagreements over government agricultural policies more and more into the open.

The powerful Farm Bureau and the expanding Catholic conference disagree almost down the line. Insiders have known this.

But Father James L. Vizzard, S.J., Washington observer for the conference, brought some differences out into public. In an editorial in Catholic Rural Life magazine, he noted that:

NCRLC favors a proposed stamp plan for distribution of farm surplus to needy families in the U. S., AFBF doesn't. NCRLC favors efforts of farm workers to win collective bargaining, AFBF opposes such efforts.

In addition, the Catholic group favors bigger foreign aid programs, the bureau wants a "substantial decrease" in what is being done now.

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Catholic newspapers have found themselves in a curious position regarding the controversy over Catholicism as an issue in the 1960 Presidential campaign.

How can they make it crystal clear that by writing editorials defending the political rights of Catholics they are not supporting a candidate who is Catholic?

Some have carried explanatory notes saying that such editorials are concerned only with the broad issue of Catholicism and U. S. politics, and not with the qualifications of a given candidate who may happen to be a Catholic.

But there is some concern that even despite such precautions these editorials will be seized upon by opponents of the Church and relayed to the uninformed as a sign that the Church supports politicians who are Catholics.

More on this issue probably can be expected from reports of the 50th annual Catholic Press Association convention in Washington May 10 to 13.

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Can it be that in the future Uncle Sam will help some people pay their hospital bill?

Such Federal subsidizing of hospital costs looms as the big issue behind the current controversy over medical costs.

The tremendous cost of medical care today and the complexity of hospital financing will be examined more closely during coming months.

Private hospitals especially, and many of them are Catholic, are finding it harder to meet bills. State and city governments often don't pay the full cost of welfare patients. Insurance programs, such as Blue Cross, often get a discount that keeps the hospital from breaking even and individual, uninsured patients often aren't able to pay their bills for months.

But you can expect that most hospitals will exhaust every means to raise money privately before they will discuss Federal aid in any form. They have a long tradition of opposing it.

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Diana Barrymore returned to the Church a few months before her death, according to Father Jerome Wilkerson, director of the Catholic Information Center in St. Louis. Her action was not known to Tennessee Williams, who arranged an Episcopalian funeral. Miss Barrymore had intended to discuss her return to the Church with Williams and perhaps be an instrument of his conversion. It was Williams' brother, Air Force Capt. Walter Dakin Williams (author of an article in this issue of Information) who influenced her return to the Church. He is an instructor at the St. Louis Information Center.



THE DOME OF SACRE COEUR DOMINATES MUCH OF THE PARIS SKYLINE.

by DAVID FINLEY  
*Travel Consultant*

## How to Do Europe

THE WORLD-FAMOUS PASSION PLAY AT OBERAMMERGAU, GERMANY, WILL BE ENACTED THIS YEAR. IT IS STAGED ONCE EVERY TEN YEARS, AS IT HAS BEEN WITH FEW INTERRUPTIONS SINCE THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.



MANY AMERICANS still have the impression that a pleasure trip to Europe is only for the wealthy —for those who can afford a chauffeur, a stable of race horses and a winter home in Florida.

This may have been true at one time, but it certainly is no longer so. More than two million American tourists this year will leave for foreign shores. Europe still remains the top travel attraction.

Only comparatively few travelers will be the idle rich. The great majority will be salaried people, small businessmen and their wives—the “average” middle-class American.

Ever since the group pilgrimages of the 1950 Holy Year, Catholics

have figured prominently in the number of European travelers. Rome inevitably is the principal destination.

Possibly you are one of those who have put this "dream" out of mind because you believe it must be too costly or because it involves too much red tape. You've heard about passports, customs inspection, currency exchange, language problems.

If you have been hesitating for one of these reasons, it's time you investigated further. A European trip may cost you no more than a three-week vacation in Florida, Cape Cod or the Rockies. And red tape has been so simplified that going to Europe has become, literally speaking, an everyday affair.

For those of you who will go abroad this year or in the future, or even make the trip in a rocking chair, here are some tips to remember.

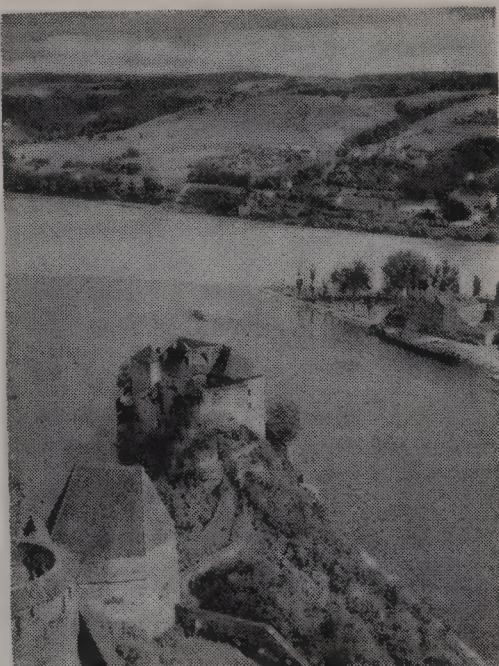
THE WAY TO get to Europe is largely a matter of personal taste. If you have a month or more at your disposal, there still is nothing quite like a summer or spring Atlantic crossing on an ocean liner. It's delightful and recreative. If, on the other hand, time is a problem, the new Boeing 707's, DC-8's and British Comets will airlift upwards of 180 passengers per trip to Europe in a short 6½ hours.

As to cost, generally it is cheaper to fly (fewer meals and less opportunity to buy shipboard items). Naturally, it's even less costly when several persons in a party contract to go abroad since a group price becomes possible.

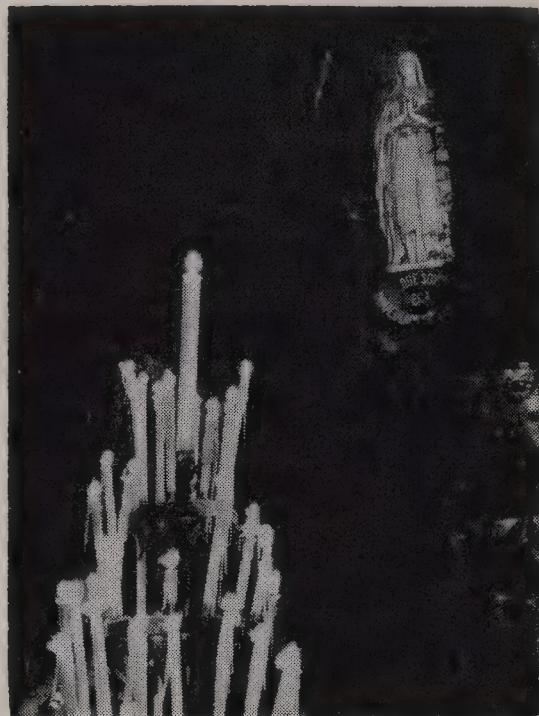
Group price generally includes transportation, lodging, tips, occasionally several of the meals, and guides. The itinerary is standard and deviations are usually frowned upon.

Group tours fit the needs especially of those hesitant about traveling on their own in unfamiliar countries. They also provide companionship, often include the destinations a person would choose anyway, and are fast becoming more efficient and interesting.

Individual tours naturally allow for personally appealing side trips and a freely developed schedule.



A CASTLE IN GERMANY ON A TRIBUTARY OF THE DANUBE.



A HIGH POINT OF PILGRIMAGES TO EUROPE IS THE GROTTO OF LOURDES.



QUAINT COSTUMES ATTRACT AMERICAN TOURISTS AT CHARTRES.

## *The past ages of*

You can stop and go as you desire. And while this generally costs more, it need not cost that much more. The catch here is knowing what you want and understanding a good deal about local customs, hotels, costs and, ideally, language.

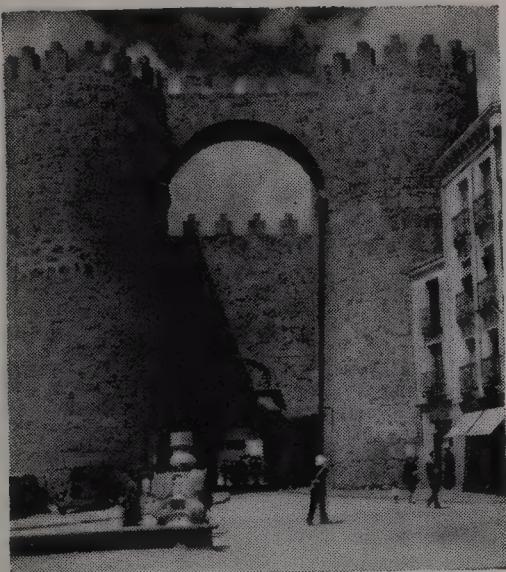
As soon as a decision has been made to do Europe, pick a reputable travel agent. He can make or break your trip. A travel agency generally makes its money from the sale of tickets, receiving a percentage of the cost from the transportation companies involved.

The tremendous growth of international travel in the past decade has led to the development of a

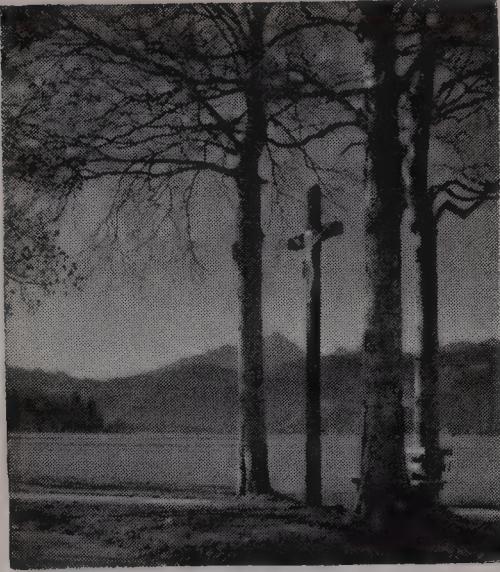
billion dollar a year industry which has attracted operators whose knowledge of Europe is often dismally inadequate. So choose carefully.

The big agencies such as Thomas Cook or American Express, while perhaps a bit too impersonal in their human relationships for the new traveler, know the business and certainly know Europe.

A word of caution, though. Don't leave the entire planning of your trip in the travel agent's hands. To be sure, he arranges your itinerary, gets your tickets and sets your reservations. This is what he's paid for. Anything else is really gratuitous.



DEFENSE WALLS AT AVILA, SPAIN, "LAND OF STONES AND SAINTS."



A WAYSIDE CROSS BESIDE A ROAD IN UPPER BAVARIA.

## *Faith become present to the European Traveler*

If he suggests a certain route or recommends a particular hotel or restaurant, unless he's been there himself he's probably getting it out of a book or on the word of someone else.

I've heard many tourists complain bitterly of being misled or "not told" by the travel bureau about certain pitfalls and difficulties encountered on route. Service of this sort, however, is simply not part of the fee.

TRAVELERS SHOULD, as part of the trip, read up on places they plan to visit. Part of the satisfaction, as the truism has it, is in the anticipation.

A visit to your library or bookseller can result in many hours of pleasurable reading on your "area." Two extremely up-to-date, popular and practical travel books are Crown Publishers' *Key to Europe* and Temple Fielding's *Travel Guide to Europe*, 59-60

For some real fun in developing your itinerary, drop a line to the European state tourist bureaus, located mainly in New York City, or to the Washington embassies of those countries you plan to visit. Request tourist literature and rates and facilities charts. The tourist offices will answer by return mail with a mountain of attractive booklets and folders detailing the

many scenic places you are about to visit.

AFTER DECIDING on the starting date of your trip, you should set up a timetable. There are plenty of things to do: passports, shots, reservations, special arrangements for renting cars, side trips.

First, your passport. Obtaining a passport used to be a discouraging experience. But today all it requires is a little time to fill out an application form procurable at one of the several passport agency offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, New Orleans and San Francisco, ten dollars of your money, two recent 3 x 3 photos, your birth certificate and some sort of personal identification. Your passport should reach you about ten days after you mail your filled-out application.

One tip on passports. If you are traveling as a family get a group photo and a single passport. It saves money and trouble and it's approved by the State Department.



HEALTH AND CLIMATE conditions across most of Europe generally approximate ours in North America. About the only medical precaution outside of the recommended pre-sailing smallpox (required for re-entry into the U. S.), tetanus and typhoid shots is to prefer bottled mineral water to tap water if your system tends to react unfavorably to travel and particularly to rich and exotic diets.

Packing for an overseas vacation is an art. Travel light, especially if air flights are to be made where anything over 44 pounds will cost you extra.

Take lightweight, inexpensive,



NIGHT VIEW OF THE COLOSSEUM, ROME, WHERE THE CHURCH'S EARLY MARTYRS MET THEIR DEATH.



INTERIOR OF ST. PAUL OUTSIDE THE WALLS, ROME, ONE OF THE FOUR MAJOR BASILICAS.



THE MOST BEAUTIFUL RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE OF FRANCE IS AT ROUEN. THE CATHEDRAL DATES FROM THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

tough plastic luggage. Heavy leather luggage may impress porters, who will accordingly expect a larger tip, but it will cut into your weight allowance.

When packing, keep in mind that you will probably indulge in that delight of most travelers—shopping. Europe excels in the manufacture of raincoats, hats, umbrellas, ties and sweaters. So leave space (and weight) for these and other items which can be purchased from London to Rome at prices considerably lower than at home.

You can bring in up to \$500 worth of duty-free goods per person if your trip takes you out of the country for more than 12 days.

As for the clothes you take, wash and quick-dry items from the skin out are to be preferred. They cut down on bulk and you can rinse and hang them out at night be-

fore bed. European laundry and dry cleaning facilities are simply not up to U. S. standards either in quality or quick service. It's far easier to plan on doing your own from the start.

If your trip takes you to several countries in Europe, you'll have to plan for the hot Roman sun as well as the cool Danish night, not to forget London drizzle and Alpine showers. So be prepared for a variety of weather.

ONE VERY practical consideration in planning your trip is money. Moving about Europe where you may cross several frontiers in the course of a single day will bring you into contact with strange, often bewildering foreign currencies.

The easiest way to cope with this often trying problem is to carry a handy "currency converter"

with which you can easily determine the rate of exchange. Pan American World Airways provides just such an ingenious wallet-size "converter." Ask your travel agent to get you one.

The safest method of carrying large amounts of money is in traveler's checks. There are several kinds — including American Express and Bank of America. These checks are recognized throughout Europe and are easily negotiable into local currencies.

ALTHOUGH ENGLISH may be your one and only language, you won't experience any real language problem to speak of in western Europe. English is rapidly becoming the common language of business, and precious few international hotels, restaurants and tourist firms can afford not to have an ample supply of English-speaking people available to help.

American travelers should realize, however, that there is no particularly essential reason why Europeans should know English. Don't hold it against a Parisian when you hear him speaking French. It's his language and his country. Respect them both.

Of course, it would be fine if you knew at least a few phrases from the languages of the countries you will visit. It adds to your enjoyment and flatters the host national.

If you had to make a choice, French would be your most practical aid. A quickie course in basic French conversation is as close as your neighborhood record shop. At your drug- or bookstore you

can purchase a copy of *French Through Pictures* for 50 cents and for another half dollar a highly useful French-English pocket dictionary.

TRAVELING IN Europe for the scenery and to get the feel of an area is best accomplished by private car or train. European cars, so popular in the U. S. these days, can be rented upon arrival with an option to buy upon your departure. This is an excellent and proven arrangement. For example, the Fiat motor company of Italy will rent one of their models for about ten dollars a day with a generous discount on gas plus insurance and the use of their extensive Europe-wide garage and service system.

European trains range from first-rate to abominable, as do, one should add, European roads. Wagon-lit sleepers and first-class compartments are quite acceptable, although in comfort they fall somewhat below our top lines.

Rail transport is a wonderfully cheap way to see the continent. The lines crisscross all of free Europe. The trains run regularly and frequently, and they are generally on time.

This past year, 13 west European countries initiated a special passenger plan for North Americans called "Eurailpass." For \$125 per person for the season, "Eurailpass" allows unlimited first-class rail use anywhere in the area roughly from Italy to Sweden.

Travel by air in Europe is safe, relatively cheap and the tourist has an impressive choice of reputable carriers to speed him to his

THE "STREETS" OF VENICE ARE ALL CANALS, AND THE GONDOLA TRANSPORTS THE TOURISTS.



destination. Any major city in western Europe can be reached easily and quickly by air.

AMERICANS ARE sometimes surprised by the accommodations they find in foreign countries. European hotels are classified according to size, location, quality of service, furnishings and price. There are deluxe, first-, second-, third-class hotels plus an array of pensions or boarding houses.

For the American traveler unfamiliar with the language or the country, the best solution is to seek reservations in first- or second-class hotels (at least in the larger cities) before arrival — long before. To depend on rooms being available as soon as you arrive is to flirt with sleeping in a pension of inferior quality. Make your hotel reservations when you purchase your ticket.

TRAVELERS SHOULD be forewarned to expect the inevitable hotel tips, taxes and charges which seem to appear out of nowhere. They are

not rigged especially for Americans. But Americans must watch that these legitimate charges are not illegitimately inflated. Always add your own bill.

You should realize that speaking English and wearing what to Europeans are "those loud clothes" will identify you wherever you go as the American you are. It also runs up your chances of being clipped.

You'll be as safe as any traveler can hope to be if you do what you do right here at home: watch the taxi drivers who have no change, who "no speaka Ingleesh" and who drive in circles to run up the meter; total up the bills you're given by the waiters and the desk clerks. And don't be afraid to speak up if a mistake has been made.

You now have the ground rules for your trip to Europe. Don't let them scare you. Most Americans who see Europe are not experienced world travelers, but if they start out determined to enjoy their trip, they will. And so will you. ■

# URBAN RENEWAL —



*There is no need for people to panic when blight threatens their neighborhood if they possess genuine Christian attitudes*

# People Before Pile-Drivers

by GERARD E. SHERRY

ST. ANNE'S parochial school in Suburbia has its first grade on two shifts, with an average class of 75 pupils.

Downtown St. John's parish has a combined first and second grade totaling 19.

Sound familiar? It should, for this is the story in dioceses throughout the country. It is a result of the nationwide flight to suburbia — anything rather than stay in the fast-dying cities of slums and blight.

Yet it is obvious that our country cannot afford the economic and social upheaval which lies in the wake of a dead metropolis. Cities must not be allowed to die. Citizens must be encouraged to stay and rebuild, or conserve what they have that the cities may be saved.

The major problems in our big cities stem from a lack of planned development, overcrowding, dilapidation and obsolescence. There are no adequate laws to regulate density and to prevent commercial encroachment on residential areas and residential encroachment on commercial areas.

There is inadequate enforcement of housing codes; a lack of recreational facilities, and an influx of unskilled and semiskilled workers.

Then there is the automobile, choking up the streets of downtown residential areas.

In an attempt to solve these problems many cities have inaugurated a program of Urban Renewal — a comprehensive attack on blight and slums involving almost all agencies and functions of local government.

Urban Renewal, however, is a program primarily of *people*, not merely of buildings and places. But people is the factor least considered by city planners and redevelopers.

It is people who are causing the current pressures felt by the industrial cities of the North, Middle West and Southwest. The reasons are quite clear:

1. The tremendous number of Puerto Ricans, Negroes and "Hillbillies" migrating to the North in search of a better educational, social and economic life.

2. The displacement of a great number of people whose homes are wiped out by renewal projects.

3. The inability of immigrants to obtain new housing.

4. The growing number of Negro professional workers whose increased incomes encourage a desire for better housing.

5. White residents' fear of having immigrant neighbors, even a limited number, and their subsequent flights to the suburbs.

PHYSICAL OR material renewal cannot succeed without spiritual re-

newal. Hence, the churches have an added incentive to give strong leadership in the renewal of our cities. Our own Catholic parishes have opportunity to show the way in reawakening genuine Christian attitudes in neighborhood relations.

But too often we seem only to stand by wringing our hands. We are allowing the problem to be faced individually instead of working toward its solution as a unified community.

This is especially true in parishes embracing areas covered by Urban Renewal programs. There seem to be great fears generated by the swiftly changing population. Racial differences come into play and many people become bewildered and disillusioned by the uncertainties which lie ahead.

Here is a unique opportunity for Catholic parishes to come forth with leadership through formation and participation. So-called "block-busting" would not be the frightening specter it has become if genuine Christian attitudes prevailed.

Racial tensions are unnecessary in our housing programs. Negro families are entitled to get out of their slum ghettos and into better houses with decent light, roomy back yards and pleasant streets.

Many can afford it and are as capable of helping conserve a neighborhood as are their White brethren. They need only a chance to prove it. Unfortunately, fears prevail and the Negro is damned before he is able to show his equal understanding of social and civic responsibility.

Our parishes can help to eliminate these fears by encouraging people to welcome Negro neighbors into a community. Property values decrease only because of panic brought about by unnecessary fears. These fears must be conquered.

When they are, neighborhoods will not decay but will be enhanced through the co-operative efforts of both races. In Rhode Island, Providence's Diocesan Catholic Interracial Council is doing outstanding work acquiring decent housing for the Negroes. It is trying to protect family life by aiding young parents whose earnest desire is to rear their children in a good neighborhood.

TO MANY CATHOLICS this will sound quite radical — quite unpleasant. They have been fed on the false propaganda that a man's color makes a difference. But does it?

The fact that some of us have not come into contact with this problem in a real way, up to now, is no excuse for us to remain impassive to it. The fullness of the Catholic Faith is still our responsibility, and we must grow to the full dimension of our Catholic heritage. We must reach across the chasm which separates many of us from each other.

We must not be afraid to clasp the hand of a fellow citizen even though a slight difference of pigmentation may exist. The present generation must go beyond the practical heresy and begin to live the Catholic dogma of the basic unity of the human family.

## *Young children have no racial prejudice but pick up hostile attitudes from their parents*

That Catholics can rise to a full measure of their heritage is attested to in northwest Baltimore where integrated housing has become a reality. The district of Ashburton has Catholics and non-Catholics co-operating in the establishment of an interreligious and interracial community.

Numerically, it is dominated by the Jewish population. These Jews were once themselves the objective when the first Ashburton neighborhood association spent considerable efforts to keep them out.

Today, a similar campaign might have been conducted against the Negro families had not the new neighborhood improvement association refused to push the panic button. When the first Negro families appeared they were made welcome and encouraged to join the association to help conserve the neighborhood.

The feeling of panic was abated as the Ashburton neighborhood association clarified its aims — to keep the homes of the area desirable; to attract new White families; to watch for zoning violations that might disturb the character of Ashburton; to keep up property values, prevent panic and resist unscrupulous real-estate deals.

In short, the association wanted to keep the future of Ashburton in the hands of its residents without exerting the pressures of prejudice on incoming Negro families.

Some White families continued

to sell their homes and move, but as they did a trend in the other direction occurred. The more than 2,000 families in Ashburton heard not only about the Negro families moving in (some 20 Negro families were added to the rolls of Our Lady of Lourdes parish) but heard also about White middle-class families moving in, too.

EDWARD VAN DE CASTLE, a Catholic and one of the two vice-presidents of the Ashburton Association, is convinced that racial tension is an unnecessary thing, reasoning that "If kids were born in an integrated area, they wouldn't get this racial feeling. They get it only from their parents."

Van de Castle said that in several homes where Negro families had replaced Whites, improvements were noticeable. "For the first time, we saw drapes in one house."

The parish of Our Lady of Lourdes which embraces Ashburton is not a panic parish. Its various organizations welcome new parishioners, be they White or Negro, in normal fashion. No special fuss is made; after all, "it's only our new neighbors getting together."

The Ashburton experiment is being repeated in other parts of the country, and it's in this area of community relations that the church groups must take the lead. In several cities — Chicago, Balti-

more, New York and Philadelphia for example — special seminars are conducted for the clergy and lay leaders of all faiths. The aim is to acquaint priests, ministers and rabbis with the problems of Urban Renewal that they will be better fitted to lead their people in the new social revolution.

IF PEOPLE ARE the primary consideration, then they must participate fully in the program. They must share in the work of improving neighborhoods because it is they who will benefit most. It is the people, then, who must be first mobilized to participate in the program and work for its successful conclusion.

How to carry out this mobilization is the real question. It can and should be done on a local basis through community improvement associations. Not enough is done in this regard. Indeed, many such associations have become nothing more than neighborhood social clubs. They place emphasis on entertainment and the like. They fight re-zoning where it will affect their property but are not interested when it affects others.

In new developments in the suburban areas, membership is pretty strong at the beginning — while a new neighborhood is consolidating itself. However, once street lights are in and the builder's guarantee has run out, very few residents retain interest.

THERE IS ALSO the question of leadership and co-ordination of community association activities. There are few permanent leaders

in these associations and some center of stability is required if slum clearance, blight eradication and neighborhood conservation is to be accomplished.

Where can we find such centers of stability, of permanence? Only the churches of a community fill the role.

They are centers attracting people of all social strata, already unified in their faiths under the leadership of pastors, ministers and rabbis. Furthermore, churches have the one extra quality needed for leadership in such an area as Urban Renewal — they are devoid of politics.

IN BOTH THE city and the suburbs, Catholic clergy and Catholic laity must show a willingness to strengthen the physical assets of the community through spiritual as well as educational formation. In this time of transition we have a unique opportunity to live our Faith.

The Puerto Rican, the Negro, the Hillbilly offer us the chance to practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Did we just learn them by rote in our childhood or can we take up the challenge of our belief that faith without good works is dead?

When the people of a community band together through mutual sympathy and understanding, great things can be accomplished. A Catholic contribution can be made by the parishes and the people within them by creating the better city of which we can all be proud, irrespective of race, color or creed.

# Entertainment

J. D. Nicola reports:

For the first time since 1953, when Mary Martin, Ethel Merman and the Ford Motor Company put "spectacular" into the TV glossary, there will be a cutback in the number of "special" programs next season.

This year (September through June) CBS will have carried over 70 entertainment "specials." Next year only 40 will be scheduled. NBC also plans a reduction, but not as drastic.

Reason for the cutback is threefold: (1) Sharp competition has skyrocketed the prices demanded by "name" stars; (2) The large number of "specials" is exhausting the possible formats to the point where the public is tiring of them; (3) Pressure upon the industry to produce more cultural and informational programs has reduced the number of hours available for entertainment "one-shots."

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The controversy over Hollywood employment of persons once politically "blacklisted" will in no way affect Legion of Decency ratings. The Legion evaluates films on the basis of "the art, not the artist."

Some persons not aware that the Legion makes such a distinction were surprised last year when a special accolade was given to an Ingrid Bergman film, INN OF THE SIXTH HAPPINESS. The same surprise may be expressed this year if the Legion finds EXODUS or INHERIT THE WIND morally unobjectionable or worthy of a special recommendation. (Persons with alleged communist backgrounds have been openly hired for both films.)

Speaking of recommendations, the Legion's next endorsement—if it has not already been announced—will be given to CONSPIRACY OF HEARTS. Those who found THE NUN'S STORY artistically appetizing but emotionally depressing may find this a more enjoyable film. It avoids the schmaltzy treatment given many convent stories and delivers a powerful message.

Film deals with the exploits of Sisters in an Italian convent who, during World War II, smuggled Jewish waifs out of an adjoining German concentration camp. One of the picture's highlights is a Yom Kippur service conducted in the convent basement.

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The three major networks have already set basic program structures for the 1960-61 TV season. The stress at CBS will be on situation comedies, NBC will rely on action series and ABC will feature a combination of both.

Sample of titles to be added to the network line-ups in the autumn: (CBS) THE TOM EWELL SHOW; THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW; DRUMBEATER, a "western comedy" featuring Tony Randall; PETE AND GLADYS, an off-spring of the DECEMBER BRIDE series;—(NBC) THE OUTLAWS, THE BARBARIANS, MICHAEL SHAYNE, a mystery-detective series; HEADQUARTERS, and THRILLER.

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Whether or not it was planned that way, NBC's censorship of that joke on THE JACK PAAR SHOW should have an effect more valuable to the network than the publicity which surrounded the incident.

Regardless of whether NBC "should have" or "shouldn't have," its image as a protector of public morals was reinforced by the well-publicized scissoring—an image which was somewhat shaken by the quiz scandal.

# The People of God

*(Continued from page 23)*

that was a disgraceful way to talk to God because she was not using any Thees and Thous.

"I'm not talking just to God," she said. "I'm talking to my Jesus, Who is my brother, and a much nicer brother than you are."

Which, with a small allowance for a lack of charity, is mighty fine doctrine, though it sounds scandalous to unaccustomed ears. It is true God is almighty, and we are less than nothing, and that each soul must echo the question: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

But, on the other hand, God did so love us that He sent His Son to give us the grace-right to be also sons of God. Thanks to Christ, we can call God Father. And our redeemer, savior, lord and judge is also our Brother.

What are we to God by grace? How much does He love us?

So infinite, so dizzying is that love that He touches us to exhaust every possible human relationship to suggest it. He has called us His children, His little ones, His sons and daughters. He has called us His brothers by the blood of redemption. He has called us also His spouses, betrothed by the love of the Holy Spirit, made one with Him by that love. We are part of Him, caught up into the intense silent active love of the Blessed Trinity.

And which of us then can feel shy with this Bridegroom of our souls?

ASK, AND SEE, how your friends pray, these matter-of-fact busy people of God. The other night a group of us broke through the shy barrier and compared notes. We found the usual rosaries, morning offerings and night prayers. Novenas. Those who could make daily Mass. Two who said the Angelus.

We found too that half the gals prayed while they did dishes and drove the car. (The other half were shocked at such informality and made time for planned meditation in their day.) We found some who sang prayers and some who preferred silence. As for the men, being less talkative by nature, they prayed less perhaps, but they prayed at work, even on commuter trains.

There was startling awareness that prayer is more than just talking God's ear off. There were those who knew the prayer of quiet, who knew that like all relationships of love, prayer must grow and deepen or die. In that growth only God can lead us on, and He can lead even you and me to the heights. That is what we were made for, the heights.

How much do we need to know to pray well? God can lead an uneducated child to the closest highest contemplation. But, as one man said that night, "We need to study about prayer too. We're built that way. Today we even study nutrition to know what to eat. We could at least work as

## For years we have been silent in church so it is hard to say even an *Amen* out loud

hard in the growth of our souls. It would be out of character to just slop around in prayer waiting for God to do the whole job."

But, private prayer is not enough, as the people of God today are aware. My life is not just between me and God. Neither is yours. We are not God's chosen *Persons*. We are His *People*. A group. A body. A society. And that is where liturgy comes in.

LITURGY is one of those words sometimes used as a prestige item, a word to be dropped knowledgeably, a word all bound up with stark black-and-white drawings, modern design, and *avant garde* thought. We speak of liturgy as if it were a fad or an illness, and we sometimes forget it is only a word for the public work of the people of God — which is praying together here as we will someday praise God together in heaven.

"I just can't stand all that noise in church," Jim said that evening. "I like to pray the Mass myself. I feel silly with offertory processions. I'm embarrassed to play-act and I don't like to have to talk to the Lord out loud in Latin or in English."

Perhaps that is our immediate task, returning liturgy to the people where it belongs. And making the people able to want it again. For years we have been diligently taught to be silent in church so it is hard to say even an *Amen* out loud.

We are also used to letting trained people do things for us. Specialists sing for us, speak for us. We forget that as the people of God we're supposed to be specialists in liturgy.

We're queasy about being ridiculous. But I wonder: how beautifully organized was that first Palm Sunday procession? We're loath to be part of an undignified crowd. But do you think that crowd of 5,000 who ate the bread and fish were a tidy lot?

We're afraid, I think, of losing our individuality. Which is precisely what we must do, in part.

God made us individuals so each could show a different face of His magnificence. But He also gave us one Life to share, grafting us into Him. And we, the Body of Christ, cannot go our separate ways. We must go His way.

When we the people of God all around the globe pray the same prayers, with the single mind of the Church celebrating the cycle of the single life of the Lord Jesus, when all our souls are concentrated on the mystery of one day's proper Scripture, we are living in a way that cannot help but change us and the world.

And knowing and praying we can go out and live as God has called us to live. For most of us that is the vocation of marriage.

A WOMAN FRIEND of mine said last week that she had at last found out what the Lord wanted her

husband to be. Since her husband had just lost his sixth job in their eight years of marriage, I was curious about the serene smile on her face.

"You know what Bill was called to be? Bill was born to be a husband! And at that he is a success!"

At first, I confess, her enthusiasm seemed ridiculous. But it was I who was ridiculous for not having grasped the same divine truth. We have come to think of vocation in the worldly sense. We must remember that each of us has a vocation by baptism to reach heaven. And our worldly success or failure is only to serve that.

"Perhaps," said my friend, "failure in business is the way Bill is meant to get to God. I wouldn't be ashamed if he were ill, or suffering any other way. And I will never again be ashamed of the cross he does carry."

Of course a husband must be a provider. But that is not his chief task. A priest must preach and teach, but no one would dream of judging him ■ failure in life just because his sermons were poor.

We judge his vocation by his success in giving the sacraments and caring for souls. Just so men and women in the vocation of marriage need to be judged in the light of their love and its ability to lead them both to God.

Thanks to Cana Conferences and the Christian Family Movement, the people of God are becoming more aware of their calling, just as Bill's wife was. They have realized their dignity as co-operators with God. They have read again those overwhelming

words of St. Paul where the love of husband and wife is compared to the love of Christ and His Church.

And they have carried that dignity and that love into the world, into daily work and recreation, and found it the touchstone to turn monotony and tinsel into joy and gold.

IT'S A VERY special life, this life of the people of God. We have to remember God's presence and believe in it while the rest of the world pays no attention or laughs. We have to trust God and abandon ourselves to His care while everyone else runs around snatching at pension plans and peace plans and penicillin.

We have to practice the virtues not as do-it-yourself hobbies but as daily discipline to shape our love. We have to learn obedience in a world of free expression, and enshrine chastity in a world that believes love makes its own rules. We have to be strangers, pilgrims, in a place where most people apparently expect to stay forever.

We have to be fools for Christ's sake.

The one thing we cannot, dare not, be is mediocre.

Was anyone ever mediocre in love?

That is what it's really about. The virile building creating defending crusading love of men. The gentle keeping yielding tending giving love of women. And the love of God in Whom all loves blend and quicken and never die.

Spirituality for the Laity: Love and Life. ■ ■



# DO PARENT- TEACHER GROUPS ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING?

by LOUISE EDNA GOEDEN

"OUR Home and School meetings remind me of an assembly line," a friend said recently. "I come out with a set smile on my face and a feeling that the teachers are as bored as I am."

"Our Home and School meetings are wonderful," another friend told me. "There are lectures by experts, really friendly talks with my kids' teachers."

"Monsignor won't have a Home and School association in our parish," a third said. "We parents would like one, too."

As a teacher, I've had some experience with parent-teacher organizations. I have always wondered what the parents really thought of them, especially in Catholic schools. These were three answers I found when I investigated.

I know that the basic reason for both the H&S (Home and School)

and PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) is to bring the home and school closer together for the purpose of helping the child. But sometimes, in the maze of organization and activity of such groups, that aim seems to be lost. Somehow the "Country Fair" and politicking for the job of president have taken the center of the stage from the child.

I believe both parent and teacher will admit that a mutual organization *can* be helpful. They won't always admit it *is*. Whether it's the H&S found in Catholic schools only (sometimes given another name, such as Mothers' Guild) or the PTA in public and some Catholic schools, the pros and cons are very much alike.

THERE WAS A time when the PTA covered both Catholic and Public schools. Some Catholic groups are still affiliated with that organization. But in recent years the National Council of Catholic Women—part of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, whose headquarters are in Washington, D. C.—have set up a special group. This is called the Committee on Home and School Associations.

From this committee, local school units may obtain much information. Its program includes an annual theme and subtopics for development during various months. Factual material and program suggestions also are supplied. Upon request, the NCCW will furnish a parish group with a manual outlining procedures for organizing an H&S association.

An interesting sidelight is that

the NCCW tries to soft-pedal its sponsorship of the H&S groups. The feeling is that fathers are wary of the "women" angle.

Development of the H&S groups becomes understandable in light of the non-sectarian policy of the National Congress of Parent-Teacher Associations.

It will not accept as a member unit any group made up entirely of parents of one religion. Thus only Catholic parish organizations which have non-Catholic parents as members are eligible for membership. Nor may a unit be affiliated with both the H&S and PTA at the same time.

The PTA is generally most concerned with promoting and protecting the welfare of children and young people. In the H&S setup, the Christian education and development of the entire family is stressed.

In both cases, there is an organizational echelon of command. For the PTA this means a local, district, state and national group. For the H&S, there are the local, diocesan and national groups, though it is possible for a local H&S to remain independent of any other group as may a PTA.

The chain of command, while having advantages in the way of additional suggestions for meetings, printed materials, etc., creates the problem of over-organization. One friend told me that her school's PTA president (who has five children under 10) went to 28 meetings in one month.

The local H&S president will probably not have so many meetings, though she will certainly be

## Fathers are wary of the "women" angle so often associated with home and school groups

expected to attend the monthly diocesan meeting plus the committee meetings of her own association. This has led some mothers (and fathers) who would otherwise take an administrative role in the organization to refuse office.

Of course, this activity may be the very thing which attracts some parents. Not too kindly, one vice-principal said, "These home and school groups give a lot of women who don't like to stay home a reason for getting out. They're the chronic joiners."

IT'S UNFORTUNATE, but true, that a certain percentage of administrators are not enthusiastic about such clubs, be they a PTA or H&S. "Untrained parents try to tell trained educators how to run the school or classes," one principal declared. "They may also come into the school whenever the spirit moves them."

A school clerk told how a club president regularly pressed her into service to type reports and notices.

In the public school groups, such interference might be more likely, since here the parents can claim they are "taxpayers" and therefore try to dictate policy. They may also force a PTA on a reluctant principal.

This could not be so in a Catholic school. Here the pastor decides whether there'll be a H&S unit. If he says "no," that's it. The bishop of the diocese may also

decide against the organization. In fact, in the United States only half the dioceses have Home and School units of any kind. And in those dioceses not every school has a club.

Whether a school has a right to deny formation of such a parent group is questioned by some. Since parents not only have the right but the duty to educate their children, the argument goes, they have the right to form a Home and School association if they feel it will forward that education. This is a purely academic approach, however, for in actuality the parish priest still has the final word.

BUT WHAT about parent-school associations generally? Do they really bring the home and school closer together?

Catholic schools have the advantage in a physical "bringing together," for the teaching Sisters are much more available than public school teachers would be. If a meeting is scheduled, there'll be no home duties, dates, or other club meetings to interfere. Also, Sisters are much more subject to the orders of their director, who in this case would be the pastor of the parish, not the principal of the school.

The school does have a real opportunity through parent-teacher meetings to explain the policies and principles of Catholic education.

One diocesan director of educa-

tion said the H&S can be an "in-service training program." A study of Catholic family life, child care, health, sanitation, recreation, and religious formation not only can open a parent's eyes to the way the school is educating his youngster, but may also give him ideas for helping the child at home.

At present, many parents may also be wondering whether their children are receiving a good foundation in reading, spelling, arithmetic and science — subjects newspapers and magazines say are not being taught properly nor thoroughly. An H&S association meeting will enable the school to explain its method of teaching these subjects and the successes it has had.

In a junior or senior high school, parents can work out jointly with the school the answers to such questions as "How often should a teen-ager have the use of the family car?" "When should prom-goers get home?" and "How can parents prevent steady dating?"

UNFORTUNATELY, in some parishes H&S is still looked upon as just a money-raising proposition. One of my friends with several children in a Catholic school complained: "I go to the meetings to learn what my kids are doing or how I can help them. Instead, I come home with a lot of tickets or chances to sell, or stuff to prepare for some country fair the school is running to make money.

"If the school needs a public address system or new equipment for the kitchen, I think that should come out of the general school fund, or be raised by general school

activities. I want to learn something at a meeting, not be shanghaied into raising money."

Turning the H&S into another money-raising group for the parish often results in fewer parents at the meetings.

IT SHOULD BE emphasized that the NCCW committee and forward-looking Catholic educational administrators object to using the H&S for such a purpose. Generally, fund-raising has become secondary in all groups. Ninety per cent of the time and effort is now being used on the "in-service training" approach. What fund-raising there is has turned to such projects as setting up scholarships for deserving graduates.

Parents can give very worthwhile service to schools other than through money-raising. It is generally accepted that teachers have too much to do anyway, especially in the way of clerical work. Thus, parents in one school took on the sale of savings stamps. They kept all records, counted money and so relieved the school people of all responsibility. Needless to say, this was most appreciated.

In some parishes, the pastor may look upon the association as a good way to give the ladies of the parish a social hour occasionally (most H&S meetings end with refreshments). He may even encourage this sociability as a harmless way to get rid of any attempt by the parents to interfere with the running of the school.

This suspicion of parental interference is prevalent among some administrators and teachers and at

times with good reason. However, the guide for setting up an H&S association lists as one of its rules that any suggestion made concerning a modification of established school policies and practices shall be referred without debate or vote to the executive committee, of which the pastor and school principal are both members *ex officio*. The PTA manual also sets a policy against such interference.

Both organizations advise that any parental visitation of a school be made only at specific times or by special appointment. This would end the complaint that parents interfere with classroom time and management.

HOWEVER, IN some dioceses and parishes it is the parents who charge interference. "When I went in to discuss with Father our next year's program," one newly-elected H&S president said, "he handed it to me complete — dates, subjects, speakers. I had nothing to say. I thought the club was for parents, too."

And there are parents who look upon the H&S association as the school's way of pushing off education problems on them. "When I send my kids to school, I expect the teachers to educate them," one woman told me.

"If my children get into trouble or if they need special attention, I'm glad to come to school. But in

the meantime, I want to let the school strictly alone." Apparently, to her the "in-service training" angle has no meaning.

ONE SPECIAL lament of teachers is that in parent-teacher groups too often the actual work of the program falls on the teacher. Parents want their children to perform for the H&S meeting — and the teacher is expected to train them. Again, this is definitely against the policy of the sponsoring groups.

On the other hand, many parents spend much time on these parent-teacher groups. More and more fathers are being drawn into activities. For this reason organization meetings — which generally used to be held in the afternoon — are more often held at night. In many of the associations, half the officers are men. The National Council is very happy with this, as are many priests and school principals. "Men give a good balance to ideas and programs," one said.

Are these H&S associations, therefore, successful? The answer is "Yes — provided the aim for which they were set up is met."

If the programs are well planned, well run and well presented, parents will turn out. But, as one administrator said, "The parent we want most to come never does. He's the one with the child who is a problem for some reason or other." ■ ■ ■

■ JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IS proving that some parents just are not getting at the seat of the trouble.

How do you lose your Faith — or nearly lose it? And how do you find the road back once you lose the way? I am no St. Augustine when it comes to soul searching, but I think my personal experience in the fogbank of unbelief might help others to avoid the same trouble.

Did I say experience? The singular? It should be experiences, for Faith is not lost quickly as you might lose your wallet. Faith slips

away slowly much as strength leaves a man who squanders his health.

To be sure, there are dramatic incidents which mark the fall. But they are not as important as people think. Some claim it was a clash with a priest that caused them to lose their Faith. That's sheer nonsense. Anyone who stops practicing his religion for so superficial a reason has been sliding downhill a long time.

Loss of Faith is a slow, subtle and complex thing. It involves emotions as well as rejection of God's grace. It is wrapped up in what religious training you got at home and what you did not get, in the concepts you bring to adulthood of the Church, God, the priest and your own soul. When the test comes some fail, or nearly fail.

In my own case I can see now how certain things went wrong early in life. For instance, I was never given any true notion of what the Church truly is. Being a Catholic was no great privilege, no distinction. On several occasions I even tried to hide the fact as a child.

Church was always a dull place where you went on Sunday. The best part was when it was over.

# I Nearly Lost My Faith

*Faith is not lost quickly as you might lose  
your wallet. It slips away slowly, almost unnoticed*

This was, perhaps, the normal child's reaction. I can remember a few exceptions like First Holy Communion and confirmation. But the reality of the Church as Christ, His Mystical Body, never got through to me. And I never understood the Mass.

DURING CHILDHOOD or adolescence I had no real understanding of Catholic truth. I memorized the catechism formulas but forgot them as soon as my Sunday School days were over. Teaching of catechism has advanced a long way since my childhood, and I think many of my later difficulties would never have developed if instruction had been geared to my needs and presented in an appealing manner.

I think, too, there was too much stress on God's vengeance. I do not mean the sensible reminder that we will be punished for sin. But God's justice was often used as a stick to make us obey in catechism class when enlightened instruction would have eliminated the need. Interested children pay attention, as I discovered when I later became a teacher.

Then, too, it was always easy to be a Catholic. Tolerance is a wonderful thing, but it can let you take your Faith for granted. It can make you fear to offend anyone by living your religion.

There were no parochial schools in the small town where I lived as a boy. I also went to public high school. There I made the basketball team and became a celebrity of sorts.

My parents, now both dead, were generous and affectionate.

They were good believing Catholics and wanted the best of everything for their children. They worked hard to see that we got it. But reflecting now, I realize that our Faith made little impression on our daily lives, and we absorbed much of the middle-class materialism that was all around us.

As for the parish priests, they were pleasant and good men but remote. I suppose my closest contact with them was in confession. But I never did come to view the priest as a spiritual father, mediating between God and men in the Mass — a father who baptized me, gave God to me in Holy Communion, strengthened me with His word from the pulpit. I learned these things, but not until many years later.

My spiritual problems during adolescence were typical. During high school, I went to confession less and less. I just didn't want to think about sin and its consequences.

As a high school senior, I did well in college entrance exams and was accepted at a university with a reputation for its social standing. Several other fellows from my home town were there, and they made sure that I pledged the right fraternity. To make the right frat house there was the difference between being somebody and nobody.

At one of the first house meetings after I was pledged, the fellows raised the question of serving fish on Friday. They claimed it caused extra expense, upset the eccentric old cook, and wasn't worth the bother for the few people who wanted it.

*I became aware that my life was as disoriented  
as the students to whom I was giving counsel*

Someone then asked if there were any Catholics who actually wanted fish served on Fridays. I said nothing. No one else spoke up either.

Strictly speaking I don't suppose we had to. After all, we didn't have to eat fish; we only had to abstain from meat. But I didn't think of that at the time. I believed I was doing something wrong in not voicing my objection. But the twinge of conscience quickly passed and soon after I found myself digging into the meat on Fridays with the others.

But it's not your stomach that makes or breaks your Faith. What makes you believe is your mind and will together with God's grace. My will was weak and I was confused about my religious life. Other values had overshadowed religious values. Several professors helped me to rationalize my Faith away.

THE FIRST WAS a history professor. His version I later discovered was badly biased, but he did his bit in tipping the scales in my case. He detailed every scandal that ever beset the Church of Rome. He accused the Church of being undemocratic and totalitarian.

A psychology professor followed a different line. His thrust was against religion for creating unnecessary guilt feelings in people. He explained away sin and guilt. Morality, he claimed, was something each man worked out for

himself in terms of the evolving standards of society.

There were other professors who pointed out things favorable to Catholicism. In a western civilization course, I heard a non-Catholic professor talk on St. Augustine, and it was one of the best lectures I ever attended. And my English professor, a devotee of Cardinal Newman, lectured on his life and had us read many of his writings.

The university had a Newman Club attached to the local parish, but I had nothing to do with it. In recent years the club has made its influence felt on the campus and provides Catholic students with intellectual and spiritual training, if they avail themselves of it. But when I was in college the club had no stature. Besides, I was so absorbed in the social life of my fraternity, my studies and trying to make the basketball team that I neglected everything else. I just quietly defaulted on the practice of my Faith and went to Mass less and less.

I would go to Mass, of course, when I was home on vacation. I was quite sure my parents would not approve of my sleeping in on Sunday morning. But I was sophisticated now and critical. The simple exhortation of the parish priest annoyed me. Occasionally he would state something that would provoke me to want to say, "prove it." Strangely enough, I was willing to accept whatever my professors told me.

One Sunday during my junior year I attended an Episcopalian service. I was quite interested in an Episcopalian girl at the time and she talked me into it. But the whole thing seemed terribly dull and I never went there again.

AFTER GRADUATION I served in the Navy a couple of years as an officer. I did not go to Mass and gave little thought to religion. But several events during these years, seemingly inconsequential at the time, did play a small role in eventually getting me back to the Church.

Wardroom bull sessions occasionally veered onto religious topics. Several intelligent young Catholic officers often made strong points for Catholic beliefs. I remember one discussion on planned parenthood — a subject I felt strongly about. No one was going to tell me about my personal affairs! But I recall I was secretly impressed by the reasonableness of the Church's position.

Another incident took place on the Korean mainland. Our ship was in dock at a Korean port and I went ashore. With a group of officers, I visited the Maryknoll nuns' clinic and orphanage where the Sisters took care of the war's human wreckage with devotion and sacrifice. I was moved — but not enough as yet to return to the practice of my Faith.

After leaving the service I got a job as history teacher in a large urban high school. My duties included counseling students, where I dealt with disciplinary, vocational and study problems.

This work brought me face to face daily with adolescents wrestling with real difficulties. There were students from broken homes or homes utterly devoid of love. There were rebellious, unruly students. There were frustrated young people who needed their energies channeled into creative activity. There were dope addicts and incipient alcoholics. There were confused students unable to prepare for the future. There were those with deeply-rooted psychological problems needing professional care and treatment.

In my first efforts at counseling, I relied heavily on my own insights. I placed supreme confidence in counseling techniques. But as time passed I made an important discovery — that damage had long ago been done to these students in their family life.

Sometimes I could help the student to repair that damage; more often I could not. I began to search for the right answer to family life and parental responsibility.

AT A MEETING of counselors one day about two years later, I heard a Catholic priest, active in counseling, crystallize what I had been searching for all the time. The solution was worked out within the framework of the true Catholic concept of marriage and family life.

His talk made a deep impression on me. It started me thinking about religion again. Now as I counseled students, I became aware that my life was basically as disoriented as theirs. Certainly I was not afflicted with their emotional

dilemmas, but I had no real sense of purpose in life. Most of my fellow teachers, like me, had only shallow humanitarian goals too.

I became more and more conscious that the deeper meaning of life was gone and our humanitarian slogans rang hollow in the face of so many troubled and disturbed students. The problem went beyond what could be dealt with in counseling alone. The institutions of society — especially marriage and family life — were not functioning correctly.

WITH THIS CHANGED attitude, I began reading on the subject extensively. At the same time I contacted the priest-counselor I had heard and discussed these things with him. He skillfully brought me to realize that I needed a little religion in my own life.

So I started back to Mass and learned for the first time in adult years how to pray. In addition I started a course in adult religion at the local cathedral. The priest-instructor undoubtedly found me one of his most recalcitrant students. For I did not intend to agree unless I fully understood it.

After taking the year-long course I could see the grandeur and meaning of Catholicism. At a week-end retreat, I discovered a group of young Catholics interested in social problems and the liturgical movement. I kept in contact with them, and our discussions helped me greatly.

IN THE PAST few years I have tried to make up for lost time. I have tried, too, to analyze what les-

sons could be learned from my near loss of Faith. The first and obvious one, of course, is the mercy and love of God, who always watches out for His lost sheep. But there are other equally important lessons.

There is the importance of home training in religion by the parents. That training must not be overbearing and stifling, but must convey that religion is something to be lived, not just another department of life.

Another lesson I learned is that those responsible for the formal religious education of youngsters should approach their job with insight and care. Don't teach formulas. Teach the children living, vital doctrine in a way they can understand. This is especially true of the teen-age years, when youngsters are often left on their own to muddle through.

WOULD I WARN against secular colleges like the one I attended? By no means if the student is well grounded in his religion and will be active in the Newman Club. It is the religiously illiterate, wavering youngster who goes downhill fast in an atmosphere such as I experienced in college. My companions at school who fell away were pointed in that direction by the time they started college. They probably would have given up on their Faith in almost any modern secular setting.

It may be obvious, but pray often for those who are away from the Church. Their only true happiness lies in being close to Christ. I know from hard experience. ■ ■

**Msgr. Ronald Knox, Evelyn Waugh (Little, Brown. \$5.00)**

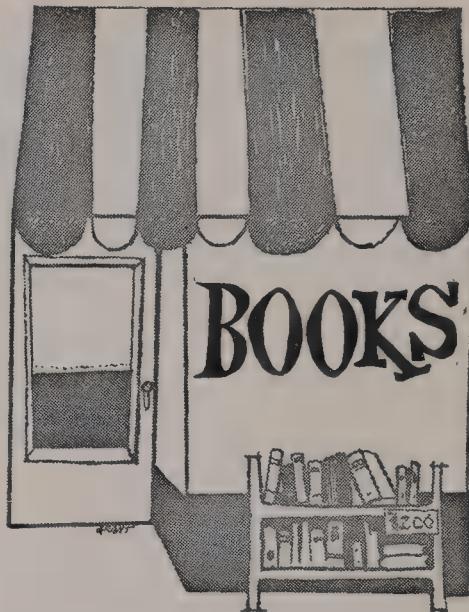
A man once wrote Monsignor Ronald Knox asking his aid in getting a friend's play produced. In reply Knox wrote: "I don't know you very well, and I don't know your friend at all. What the hell does he write plays for?"

Knox never mailed the letter, but the fact that he could have written it will probably endear him to many people. Evelyn Waugh includes it to give us better understanding of one of the most charitable and learned men England has ever given to the world.

The idea of having Waugh write Knox's biography was the Monsignor's himself. In 1950 he asked Waugh if he might appoint him in his will as his sole literary executor. "He knew my curiosity and lack of discretion," Evelyn Waugh says. "He knew the kind of book I was likely to write."

Now that we have the book we are not sure it is quite the biography Knox had in mind. It presents the picture of a complex man who in his own quiet way suffered much. Waugh tells of the price he paid in becoming a Catholic: rejection by his own and frequent misunderstanding among his new-found brethren.

As with most Waugh books, a furious controversy is already raging. Some claim Waugh has imputed his own snobbery to the Monsignor. For although Knox spent most of his time in upper-class English Catholic surroundings, he had no caste feelings



toward his fellow clerics from more humble origins, the plaint goes.

Others think that Waugh missed the essential holiness, charity and priestliness of Knox to stress the conflicts, interior and exterior, that were part of his life.

Despite these complaints we cannot be too grateful that the first biography of a man who spent his lifetime examining and weighing words has been written by Evelyn Waugh, a master craftsman in the use of words. He has given us a deeply moving and sometimes exciting picture of a profound and saintly priest.

*Wrap-up: Tolle, lege.* Four stars.

**The Historic Reality of Christian Culture, Christopher Dawson (Harper. \$3.00)**

Dawson devotees are by now used to the universal historical sweep of his writing and its prophetic insight. His latest book is

no exception, restating the central theme of his recent works in lucid prose and with a minimum of bulky erudition.

Dawson warns that we live in a secularistic world which has lost its religious roots. This is true of totalitarian secularism (communism) or democratic secularism (the western democracies). Unless we find some way to reinvest our society with spiritual and moral values, the weight of materialistic secularism will eventually engulf men in a new barbarism that might lead to the destruction of the race through nuclear war.

The greatest danger comes in the field of education, the author fears. For the Church must have freedom to educate if she is to produce a well-rounded Christian. Yet here she is being challenged by the State, which more and more demands for herself a kind of religious allegiance and takes over every aspect of human life.

Is there a solution to the grim dilemma Dawson poses? He feels there is — at least the beginnings of one if an objective study of Christian culture would be conducted in the universities. Then the secular scholar would come to appreciate the meaning of Christian culture and the spiritual and human values it gives to men.

Dawson is himself deeply imbued with Christian hope, so he feels "there is still time" — the closing message of *On the Beach*.

Christopher Dawson is one of the great adornments of modern Catholic thought. Every book of his deserves careful scrutiny, this one no less than the others.

**Wrap-up: Words of wisdom from a great Catholic thinker.**

**The Violent Bear It Away**, Flannery O'Connor (Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. \$3.75)

Since her first novel eight years ago, Flannery O'Connor has had a coterie of fans, especially among professional critics and her fellow novelists. A collection of short stories five years ago solidified her prestige, and her second novel should increase it. Whether her audience will widen, however, is questionable.

Her fiction is born of ideas that are both profound and disconcerting. The form she gives them, however, is shockingly sparse. Her

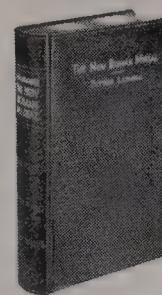
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characterization borders on the grotesque. The narrative is permeated with violence and a somewhat macabre humor.

The most evident reflection of this novel's conflicts is in its vocabulary. A few words reappear constantly. They are love, death, violence, reason, reality and freedom.

Of these "reality" is central. It is reality that Tarwater, the primary character, searches for. This fourteen-year-old has been raised by a great uncle in the backwoods of Tennessee. The old man, "a prophet of the Lord," had abducted the boy to free him of the world, and to the boy he passes on the mission of prophecy.

At the old man's death, however, Tarwater goes to the evil city to live with an uncle, Rayber, who believes that reality, especially life, can and must be reduced to intellectual formulae. Tarwater must choose between the "reason" of his uncle and the religious "violence" of the old man.

The touchstone of his struggle is Rayber's idiot son. Is he to be seen as "a mistake of nature" (Rayber's view) or as one "beloved of the Lord" (the old man's view)? If the latter, then the child must be baptized. Violence, as you might suppose, carries all before it.

Miss O'Connor's novel is an extraordinary achievement of literary art and more. It is a magnificent and disturbing drama of profound theological and human significance. But, perhaps, its strong flavor will be too much for the taste of most fiction readers.

Wrap-up: Eerie excellence.

**Saints Who Made History**, Maisie Ward (Sheed & Ward. \$4.50)

Maisie Ward has added another title to her growing list of excellent books. *Saints Who Made History* is subtitled "The First Five Centuries" and it is that period of the Church that she runs through her typewriter.

But she does it in a highly personalized way, concentrating on the great saints of the era: bishops such as Ignatius, Polycarp, Ambrose and John Chrysostom; hermits and ascetics like Anthony and Jerome; founders of the new religious communities like Basil and Benedict.

But primarily they are saints and this is the fascination of her story as she blends their humanity and spirituality in an excellent series of profiles.

Wrap-up: Fine portraits of early saints.

**Is There an American in the House?** David Cort (Macmillan. \$3.95)

David Cort writes his sharp-edged prose for the opinion journals. You may have read him in *The Commonweal*, but mostly these days he is found in *The Nation*.

This collection of his material looks on America as a vast balloon filled with bad air. Mr. Cort would like to burst that balloon. Inflating it are the major drives of the American people as Cort judges them: "to play the devil, to communicate, to progress, to build empires, to be American, to higher communicate, and to be reassured."

The author wants his book to

be disturbing. It is; but unfortunately not only in the way he wants, but also in a quite different manner.

When he decries Madison Avenue's slaughter of intelligence, or the McCarthy approach to communism, or the monsters that come disguised as slick magazines, most readers will catch their breath and admit that "he just might have something there."

But when you read all forty essays side by side, Mr. Cort's principles are likely to bother you almost as much as the present state of American life. The trouble with his principles is that they are almost impossible to isolate. One suspects that they represent a cross between good taste and a view of an American who is a nonconformist.

What is more disturbing is the feeling that for all his vehement criticism, Mr. Cort is open himself to the same kind of complaint. Take his essay on *Time's* brand of journalism. He doesn't like its pseudo intellectualism, its well-polished surveys of other people's research. Then read his essay on water power in the political and social life of the nation. It smacks of *Time*. Or take his essay on the supermarkets. Like so many other chapters it sounds a little like a rehash of other's research.

Mr. Cort is a gadfly, and one that writes exciting, journalistic pieces. Taken as such, his book can be a stimulating and disconcerting experience. Just beware of taking him too seriously.

Wrap-up: A poor man's Mencken.

*Distinguished  
Catholic and Non-Catholic  
Educators, Historians  
and Sociologists Look at . . .*

## **ROMAN CATHOLICISM and the AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE**

*Edited by  
Thomas T. McAvoy, C.S.C.*



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# Books

Virginia Kendall reports:

It will be the "soaring sixties" for book publishers if they take to heart the highly optimistic predictions regarding MARKETS OF THE SIXTIES, by the editors of Fortune (Harper). The materialistic utopia for the USA cited by these experts includes a higher standard of living (45 per cent of the nation will have a \$7,500 annual income after taxes), fewer class lines, greater-than-ever mass culture and an ever-increasing market demand for "quality, authority and competence" in reading material.

While most publishers probably won't concede such a perfect state-of-business for the next decade, a bright future is expected for better books and bigger markets plus a wider variety of subject matter in print. An expected increase of 19 per cent in the U. S. population will mean a 20-50 per cent rise in sales of textbooks on all educational levels where the shortage of reading material is already acute. (This could mean a potential market of 400 million dollars.)

A "spectacular" future is anticipated in the paperback field with a 108 per cent rise in volume despite obstacles such as higher production and reprint costs—resulting in higher retail prices. Meanwhile publishers are keeping their eyes on the expanding supermarkets, new distribution outlets and the growing teen-age—young adult field—which may increase 63 per cent in 10 years. The latter already has a \$9,000,000 annual income and represents 10 per cent of the present reading public.

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In the colorful world of children's books, 1960

will probably top 1959 as a record year for book sales and the number of books published. With increased competition in this market, publishers are stepping up promotion and publicity for special authors and titles.

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Despite gloomy views from a few of the critics on the Catholic literary scene, some excellent prize-winning books have appeared recently: THE IMAGE INDUSTRIES, by William Lynch, S.J., and VATICAN DIPLOMACY, by Robert Graham, S.J. Sheed and Ward will receive the Thomas More Association Medal in May for publication of Father Lynch's book as "the most distinguished contribution to Catholic publishing in 1959." Father Graham's VATICAN DIPLOMACY (Princeton University Press) won the John Gilmary Shea Prize given by the American Catholic Historical Association as the "most distinguished contribution to historical knowledge."

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Another promising newcomer to the field of Catholic fiction is Elizabeth Ann Cooper, recent winner of the Doubleday Catholic Prize Contest for the "best novel of Catholic interest." A first novel, NO LITTLE THING is the story of a priest's struggle with his soul.

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Recommended for your home library, spiritual reading shelf and study clubs: SAINTS WHO MADE HISTORY, by Masie Ward and THE LAST HOURS OF JESUS, by Ralph Gorman, C.P. (both Sheed & Ward); GRACES OF THE RISEN CHRIST, by Bernard Wuellner, S.J. (Bruce); THE DISCOVERY OF GOD, by Henri de Lubac, S.J. (Kenedy); LITURGY AND CONTEMPLATION, by Jacques and Raissa Maritain (Kenedy); THE MARY BOOK, by Henri Daniel-Rops (Hawthorn) and THIS IS ROME, by Fulton J. Sheen, H. V. Morton and Yousuf Karsh (Hawthorn).

*My non-Catholic boy friend is taking instructions. But as far as I can remember, he showed no interest in the Church until I told him that I would never marry anyone but a Catholic. How can I be sure that he will be a sincere convert?*

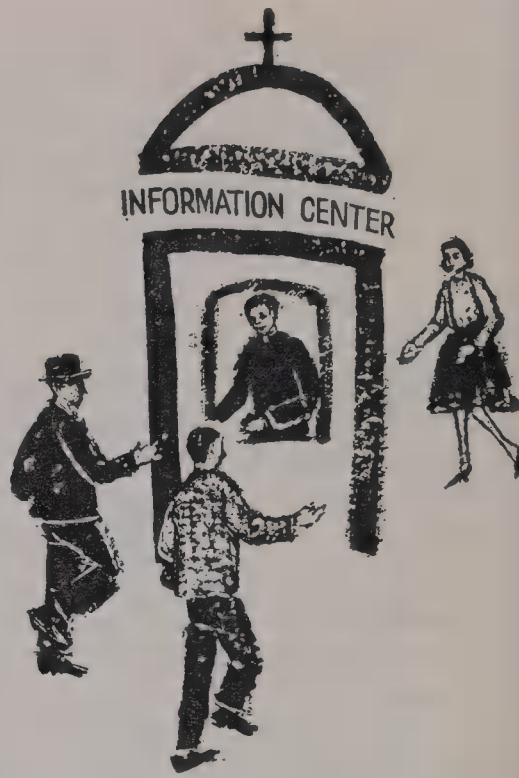
Only God knows with absolute certainty our motives for doing anything. But there are signs which point to sincerity in a prospective convert. The priest-instructor will be carefully watching for some of these; others you can observe better than he.

Does your young man ask you questions about what is being explained to him? Normally, someone in his position has at least an occasional question which he delights in presenting to a Catholic friend — who often is embarrassed by not knowing the answer.

Does he at times comment on how reasonable or consoling a particular Catholic teaching is? He should sometimes experience a profound satisfaction which he is willing to reveal at least to you.

Does he without any special urging on your part attend Sunday Mass and show a new interest in praying? If not, the instructions are not "taking."

When you talk over marriage and family life, does he show a firm determination to observe the moral law, particularly with re-



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JOHN ZIEGLER, C.S.P., S.T.D.  
DIRECTOR

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gard to artificial birth control? After the instructions on matrimony, he must be willing to accept the Church as an infallible teacher on the obligations of married people.

*Why is it that the conversion of a well-known person to the Church is given such publicity? Isn't God just as pleased with one convert as another?*

Please send all questions on religion and morals to:  
Information Center, % Information Magazine  
180 Varick Street, New York 14, N. Y.

Every conversion is worth shouting about. When a person leaves the shadows of doubt and error to embrace the unchanging truth of Christ, this is news, great news. The angels rejoice, the Church thanks God.

But every conversion is not the kind of news that people will read about. The most important events in our lives usually go unnoticed except by our families and friends. Whereas once a person becomes famous, everything that happens to him is newsworthy. And for an editor on either a secular or religious paper, "names" make news — the bigger the name, the bigger the news.

Publicizing the conversion of a well-known personage can have a number of good effects. In the case of an intellectual, for example, it can help defeat the notion that to become a Catholic one must renounce his reason. By calling attention to the fact that there are converts from all walks of life, it can witness to the Church's universal appeal.

Famous converts may or may not be greater in the eyes of God than those who in the eyes of the world are quite ordinary people. Fame before God is achieved by loving Him very much. But insofar as the example of prominent converts can help to lead others to His truth, Christ surely approves of telling the world about them.

### *Why do we call the Pope "His Holiness"?*

It is a title given to him because of the sacred character of his office.

We refer to His Honor the Mayor and His Excellency the Governor out of respect for the positions they hold. So, as the personal representative of Christ on earth, the Pope is spoken of as His Holiness.

We do not use the title because we necessarily consider the Pope himself a saintly man.

*Doesn't the Church give entirely too much attention to sex? We complain about the overemphasis of sex in our country today, but Catholic magazines and sermons are filled with it too.*

Wouldn't it be more correct to question the Church's giving too much attention to sexual *morality*? There is a world of difference between the subject matter of a lurid paperback and a Catholic pamphlet on courtship and marriage.

Responsible people cannot help but be alarmed by the present obsession with sex. But as long as it continues, the Church will have to go on reminding modern men and women why God created them male and female. They must often be warned of the results of using sex as a plaything, or they will succumb in even greater numbers to the constant bombardment of sex in pictures and writing.

You have a point, however. Catholic spokesmen can be pushed into writing and preaching about sexual morality so often that our people come to think there is hardly any sin but sexual sin. The Catholic Church stands almost alone today in defending many points of the moral law regarding

sex; perhaps at times we priests let this fact overwhelm us.

You should be grateful though, as you surely are, for the chance to hear the voice of Faith and reason in an area where instinct has become the guide for so many. Purity is only one of the Christian virtues, but it has become in our day — more than ever before perhaps — one of the most distinctive marks of a true follower of Christ.

*How can I explain to a Protestant friend of mine that by calling Mary the Queen of Heaven we are not making her equal to God?*

First, assure your friend that as a Catholic you agree without reservation that adoration is due to God alone. Mary is a creature like ourselves. To think of her as equal to God would be ridiculous and sinful, a frightful insult to God.

Please do not consider a frank statement like this unnecessary. More than a few non-Catholics wonder if we have not allowed mere veneration of Mary to creep up to the level of worship. Too often we are tempted to take this as a sign of bad will on their part. In most cases they have simply never had the opportunity to check their suspicions against the facts.

We call Mary the Queen of Heaven for several reasons, the most obvious of which is that she is the mother of heaven's King, Christ our Lord. Indeed, by far the most important point you can

make with your friend is that from this one truth — that Mary is Christ's mother — proceed all our Catholic doctrines about her, all our devotional practices, all the titles we give her.

Mary also deserves the title of Queen because she is the greatest of all the saints. It was fitting from every point of view that He who came to conquer sin should be born of a sinless mother. So we believe that from the moment she began to live, from her conception, Mary was full of grace, a friend of God.

We Americans bestow the title of "queen" rather freely — and rarely for beauty of soul. Your friend should be glad to discover that one woman is so honored because of her stainless life.

Finally, we call Mary a queen because of her role in our redemption. To be sure, the human race has only one Redeemer, and He is Jesus Christ. No one can substitute for Him. But from Bethlehem to Calvary, in everything He did to redeem us, Christ chose to be most closely associated with one person — Mary.

Now that they are both in heaven, we believe that Mary still co-operates with Christ in handing out the graces we need to save our souls — the privilege of a queen.

Rightly understood, none of these reasons for calling Mary a queen obscures the difference between her and her Son, between a mere creature and her Creator. Rather, they highlight the fact that her Son is true God. For if He were not, none of this honor could be paid to her.

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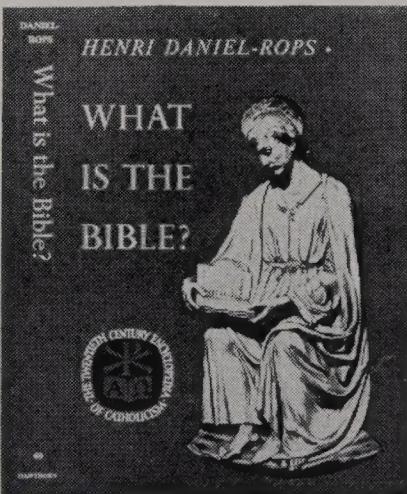
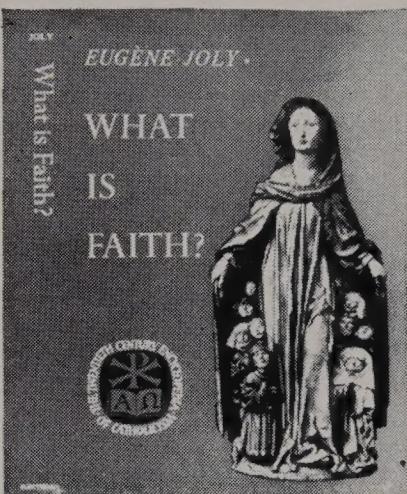
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